

PHILIPPINE SUNDAY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

HOLIDAY SHOW: Members of a children's choir sit on the edge of the huge fountain of the well-lighted Cultural Center of the Philippines on Roxas Boulevard in Manila while waiting for their turn to perform on the stage on the grounds for a free Christmas show extravaganza.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Jalosjos flees to Dapitan

Justice secretary orders arrest of child rapist

By Richel Umel and Bert Laput *Inquirer Mindanao*
Julie M. Aurelio and Leila B. Salaverria in Manila

DAPITAN CITY—IN DEFIANCE OF MALACAÑANG, CONVICTED child rapist Romeo Jalosjos flew home to Zamboanga del Norte yesterday despite a Palace order for him to be kept in prison. Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez ordered his immediate arrest.

The former Zamboanga del Norte representative arrived in Dapitan City by private plane from Manila around 5 p.m. Saturday, Councilor Apple Marie Agolong told the INQUIRER by phone.

Agolong did not say who was with Jalosjos or on what authority the former lawmaker left detention at the National Bilibid Prisons (NBP) in Muntinlupa City. Agolong said she was

with a group that welcomed Jalosjos at the Dapitan City airport.

"I was surprised," Gonzalez told the INQUIRER in Manila. "I have ordered the PNP (Philippine National Police) and the NBI (National Bureau of Investigation) to arrest him."

"There was no authority for him to leave," Gonzalez said, adding that he

JALOSJOS/A6

At 75, doctor is longest-serving active medical volunteer

By Gia Damaso-Dumo
Contributor

HE CAN WELL BE THE PHILIPPINES' own Albert Schweitzer, his inspiration and, like himself, a role model for generations of physicians.

At 75, Dr. Mario S. de Villa is arguably the oldest and longest-serving active medical volunteer in the Philippines. He began taking part in medical-surgical missions in 1967, in the process visiting about 40 provinces, scores of towns and cities, and some of the remotest islands and villages.

The subjects of his stories are not only the severe and strange cases he has treated in his missions, but also the adrenaline rush of white-water rafting in Tabuk, Kalinga, the visual delights of a daylong road trip to Paracelis, Mountain Province, and the anticipation of yet another mission to Jolo early next year—stories told with excitement, his gray eyes sparkling.

"I will continue to volunteer until I'm 89," declared De Villa in Septem-

AT 75/A8

Artist invents gift of colors for the blind

By Jocelyn R. Uy

RACHELLE PILARES, blind since she was 5, recites the colors of tiles she had carefully arranged.

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

RACHELLE PILARES, BLIND SINCE the age of 5, expertly recited the colors of hand-painted cardboard tiles she so carefully arranged in a Velcro spread like any other person with a normal eyesight.

Her masterpiece was a composite of patterns she put together using colored tiles of various sizes—a big red cross in the center, a big blue rectangle in one side, a smaller violet cross with a green border in another, a brown triangle.

She also described her work perfectly.

The dominant hue in her "painting" was blue, her favorite Yuletide color,

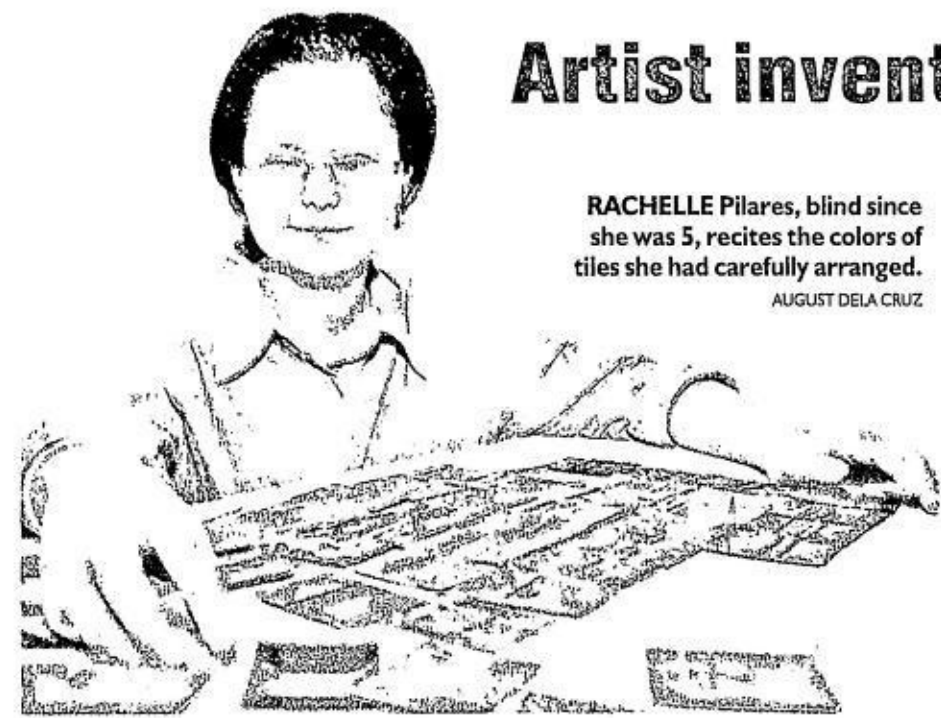
Pilares told the INQUIRER.

"Christmas is really colorful but in my mind, its color is blue because it symbolizes peace and it is pleasant to the eyes," said Pilares, whose optic nerves stopped sending messages to her brain before she finished kindergarten.

For the first time since her world plunged into darkness, the 20-year-old who uses eyeglasses for protection is "seeing" a cheerful and florid Christmas this year. Thanks to the strand system devised by noted Filipino visual artist, Paz "Ching" Abad-Santos.

While the Braille system allows the blind and visually impaired people to read and write, Abad-Santos' inven-

ARTIST/A10



Latin hymns sung in Masses in Pampanga

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

MABALACAT, PAMPANGA—THE PASTORELLA has always held the people of Mabalacat under its charm.

A set of Latin hymns sung during the nine-day Christmas Masses, the pastorella has not been heard in many Pampanga towns for 40 years after Vatican II prescribed the use of local languages in religious rites.

But the tradition has lived on in Mabalacat, specifically at the Our Lady of Divine Grace Parish, according to Robby Tandingan, a resident and executive director of the Holy Angel University's Center of Kapampangan Studies.

The pastorella is actually a local term for the Misa de Pastores in hon-

LATIN/A6

GMA, Panlilio meet in Mass: Peace be with you

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo dutifully did her part when told to offer the sign of peace during the traditional Misa de Gallo here.

She turned to San Fernando Mayor Os-

car Rodriguez, shook his hand and uttered the usual "peace be with you."

Then she turned to Pampanga Gov. Eddie Panlilio and made the same gesture, which she also repeated to Rep. Aurelio Gonzales.

GMA/A8



Inquirer keeps No. 1 spot in readership, says survey

WITH OVER HALF OF RESPONDENTS saying it was their broadsheet of choice, the Philippine Daily Inquirer continues to be the most widely read broadsheet in the country, according to latest survey results by Nielsen Media Research.

Results from the "Nielsen Media Index Study (Enhanced Wave 2)," which covers the whole year of 2007, showed that the INQUIRER was the choice of 53 percent of those who said they had read a broadsheet the day before.

The survey estimated that the INQUIRER had 1.3 million readers.

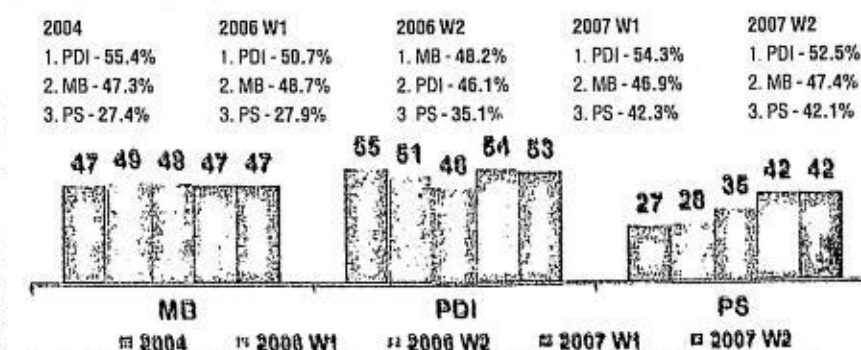
Manila Bulletin came second with 47 percent (1.17 million readers), while the Philippine Star was third with 42 percent (1.05 million readers).

"What a wonderful Christmas gift for the INQUIRER!" INQUIRER president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez said in a statement.

"The survey results once again affirm our Number One spot over the past decade," Romualdez said, citing surveys conducted by another outfit before Nielsen began its own surveys

INQUIRER/A10

National Urban among yesterday broadsheet readers



SOURCE: NIELSEN MEDIA RESEARCH MEDIA INDEX 2007 W2
*enhanced, consists of combined wave 1 and 2 sample.

TALK OF THE TOWN /A14

3 doctors and a professor of integrative medicine show merrymakers how to beat holiday diet disaster and still celebrate



ENTERTAINMENT /H2

Robin Padilla talks about prison years as best time of his life, and why he almost never fails to score with ladies

GLOBAL PINOY /A20

Ninotchka Rosca writes about how some Filipino domestic workers celebrate Christmas away from home

NEWS /A4

Adrian Cristobal, essayist, columnist, dies at the age of 75



WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Visayas and Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

Metro Manila Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod Partly Cloudy
Baguio Partly Cloudy	Roxas Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao Partly Cloudy	Cebu Partly Cloudy
Laosang Partly Cloudy	Tacoloban Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga Cloudy with Rains
Laguna Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro Cloudy with Rains
Calapan Partly Cloudy	Davao Cloudy with Rains

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Second FRONT PAGE

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EZ2

SIX DIGIT

27 8 6 8 2 2 8 2

(In exact order)

Mid-Day SUERTRES Evening

3 9 2 3 4 2

6/42 LUZON/VIS-MIN

3 9 18 25 33 38

P9,640,715.40

Roxas got it all wrong—Palace

US lobby deal not yet final, is worth only \$500,000, says Bunye

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ **SC REVERSES**
La Salle expulsion
of 3 frat men /A9

■ **LAWMAKERS**
join fight against
cigarette smoking
/A11

■ **VILLAR**
mum on
plot to
unseat
him /A5

■ **GONZALEZ:**
What 'diamond
statement?'
/A18



By Michael Lim Ubac

MALACAÑANG DEFENDED ITS MOVE TO CONTRACT an American lobby firm in Washington and said Sen. Mar Roxas, who exposed the deal, had his facts all wrong.

In an e-mailed response to Roxas' attacks, Bunye said the "proposed fee is only \$500,000, not \$50 million (*susmaryosep*)" and it was still under negotiation.

Bunye also took issue with Senator Roxas for claiming the other day that the pricey contract with Covington and Burling LLP was wasteful and lacked transparency.

Said Bunye: "This contract, including the scope and size, are consistent with government relations consulting agreements entered into by previous administrations and by many other governments around the world."

Bunye said Ambassador to Washington Willy Gaa and his team in Washington "are currently in negotiations" with Ambassador Stuart Eizenstat, partner and chair of the International Practice of Washington law

and government relations firm, Covington and Burling.

Advancing RP interests

The subject of negotiations is a contract totaling \$500,000 "to provide support to advance Philippine interests in trade, development assistance, military and security cooperation and other bilateral issues."

He denied that the Palace was keeping the contract under wraps, after Roxas demanded that the government publish in full the provisions of the contract to avoid a repeat of the controversy generated by the equally controversial P50-million Venable LLP contract in 2005.

Bunye assured that "once those negotiations, which have followed all government procurement regulations, have been completed we will make an announcement to confirm that Ambassador Eizenstat has

been formally engaged to work on behalf of the Philippines in the United States."

Bunye also defended the credibility of the lobby firm, saying Eizenstat "is one of the most distinguished and accomplished public servants and legal minds in Washington, and Covington and Burling is one of the premier law and government relations firm in the United States."

Everyone does it

Contacted by the INQUIRER, President Macapagal-Arroyo's Chief Legal Counsel Sergio Apostol said he was not privy to the negotiations with Covington and Burling, but added that there was no government in the world without a lobbyists in Washington.

"They all have lobbyists in Washington. There is nothing unusual (in contracting the services of a foreign lobby firm) to protect (the country's) interests," said Apostol, but stressed that the contract was "not yet signed."

He reacted to Roxas' challenge to defend the contract "in Plaza Miranda or any market in the country."



BUNYE

"Definitely we will do that. We will just give statistics. Every government has lobby firms (in Washington) to protect their interests," said Apostol.

"Wasteful? We're trying to get some aid, protect our interests. Why? Because there is no one there to protect us. We can't rely on our own embassy although they're also lobbying."

Besides pushing for increased military aid to the country, he cited the case of our sugar exports which had been imperiled by a threat of a quota for sugar

and copra (coconut meat) "which they said is not suited for use in the US."

Professional lobbyists

"There are a lot of Philippine products that need to be lobbied for inclusion in trade agreements (with the US). In fact, the US has moved to reduce our sugar quota. Without our lobbying, our huge export to the US will be slashed dramatically."

Apostol said lobbying was allowed by US laws.

"These are professional lobbyists. They talk to people who are involved (in decision-making). If it's for aid, they have it released. If there's a need to protect our interest, they protect our interests."

He pointed out that even "leftists and Protestant bishops" had lobby firms in the US.

"We lost (in some areas) because leftists have (lobbyists) in the US Congress. They have, but we don't."

"He (Roxas) is talking because of his ambition to become president of this country. Remove that ambition and I think he will not be talking," said Apostol.

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FINAL REPORT

House ethics body junks case vs JDV

By Norman Bordadora

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE on Ethics and Privileges unanimously dismissed with finality the ethics complaint filed against Speaker Jose de Venecia last September for evident lack of jurisdiction and for utter lack of merit.

The overwhelming decision dismissing the complaint was contained in the 127-page Committee Report No. 25 which was signed by 21 Committee members and 19 ex-officio members and submitted to the plenary on Dec. 18 by Romblon Rep. Eleandro Madrona.

Madrona chairs the House ethics committee.

"Going over the pleadings and over existing laws and legal pronouncements on the subject matter of conflict of interest which is the principal issue raised against the Respondent, it is clear that the allegations in the Complaint are completely devoid of merit," the committee decision said.

De Venecia expressed satisfaction over the dismissal, saying that he "was confident all along that the complaint totally lacked merit from the day it was conceived."

The dismissal came after a review of the allegations in the verified complaint filed by lawyer Robert Rafael J. Pulido and the point-by-point reply to the charges which De Venecia, through his counsel Raul Lambino, filed on Nov. 28.

It took into account the Speaker's reply that his son and namesake, Jose de Venecia

III, was "neither an incorporator nor an officer" of Multi-Media Telephony when MTI applied for a legislative franchise and was granted one in 1993.

On the matter of the unsolicited proposal submitted by the Speaker's son to build the government's national broadband network (NBN) project, the Committee members took note of the Speaker's proposal that the NBN project be undertaken on a Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) basis that will not involve any government loan, government expense and risk or sovereign guarantee.

The NBN project which was awarded to Chinese firm ZTE was suspended and later cancelled by President Macapagal-Arroyo amid charges that the project was tainted with corruption.

Earlier, De Venecia's counsel said Pulido's complaint was part of an "orchestrated attack to vilify the House leader."

Lambino said it was clear from the start that the Committee had no jurisdiction over the complaint but Speaker De Venecia insisted that he reply to the allegations point-by-point to prove that the Pulido complaint was completely devoid of any merit.

On Dec. 4, the Committee dismissed the Pulido complaint by a vote of 25-0 upon the motion of Rep. Mauricio Domogan and Rep. Rufus B. Rodriguez. Rep. Teddy Casino, Deputy Speaker Eric Singson and Makati Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr. seconded the motion to dismiss the complaint.

WASTONG PAGKAIN, ABOT-KAYANG BILHIN

BILHIN PRESYO/Kilo

NFA Rice P18.25
Presyo sa lahat ng Barangay Food Terminal at Tindahan Natin.

BILHIN PRESYO/Kilo

Regular Well Milled P20-25
Well Milled Rice P22-29

Presyo sa Metro Manila at sa Priority One Provinces:
Zamboanga del Norte, Masbate, Maguindanao, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Norte, Mountain Province, Lanao del Norte, Camarines Norte, Sarangani, Zamboanga Sibugay.

Rice Premium P27-30

Rice Fancy P30-45

Bangus P70-90

Tilapia P60-80

Galunggong P95-120

Kamatis P40-70

Pechay P25-50

Sitaw P45-60

Talong P40-65

Presyo sa palengke sa Metro Manila.

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SOURCE: DA-Bureau of Agricultural Statistics



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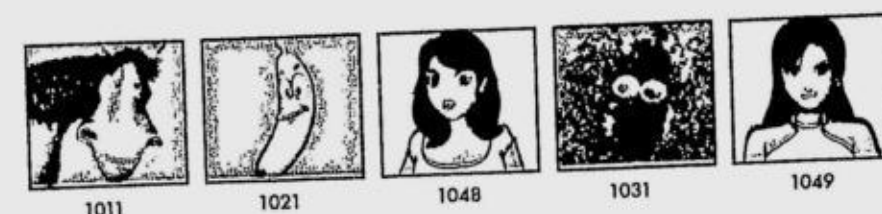
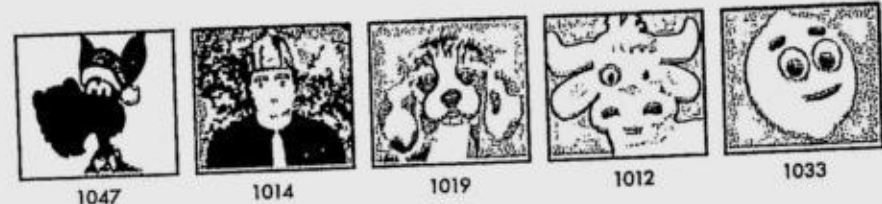
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SMART
THE POWER TO LEAD

Adrian E. Cristobal, public man of letters; 75

By Lito B. Zulueta

ADRIAN E. CRISTOBAL SR., POLITICAL satirist, essayist, columnist, fictionist, playwright, literary organizer, popular historian of Andres Bonifacio, and Marcos government functionary and adviser, died of complications arising from lung cancer yesterday morning. He was 75.

"Adrian Cristobal was first and foremost a political writer who started writing short stories but developed into a fine essayist in the tradition of Fred Mangahas, Salvador P. Lopez, and perhaps E. Aguilar Cruz," said writer Elmer Ordoñez who, like Cristobal, was a member of the original Raven group of writers based in the University of the Philippines (UP).

"A quite cynical person, possibly acquired in the practice of journalism (as reporter, columnist, editorial writer, and publisher) and writing for public figures, he was in his element in the satirical mode," added Ordoñez, who's national secretary of the Philippine Center of the International PEN (Poets, Playwrights, Essayists, Novelists).

"He took his death with grace," said Inday Espina Varona, editor in chief of the monthly Philippine Graphic news magazine, where Cristobal was publisher.

Early last month, Cristobal became suddenly sick and failed to grace the annual Nick Joaquin Forum, sponsored by the Graphic. He thought he had bronchitis but a biopsy showed he had cancer. He was hospitalized at the Makati Medical Center.

Multi-faceted life

Friends who visited him said he was upbeat and quick on the banter. "He took it very well," Varona said. "He was not a whiner. Everybody in the family was calm."

He is survived by his wife, the former Ma. Teresita Soriano, and children Anna C. Torres, Celin, Stella C. Arenas, Adrian Jr., Pia Kahn and Monica Graham.

His remains were cremated yesterday. A wake will be held on Dec. 26 and 27 at the Santuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park, Makati. A funeral Mass will be held at 9 a.m. on Dec. 28.

Although known mainly to the public

as a columnist (he used to write columns for this paper, and was writing them for the Manila Bulletin and the Graphic before he became bed-ridden), Cristobal led a multi-faceted public life.

During the Marcos years, he was chair of the President's Center for Special Studies, a Malacañang think tank whose staff wrote speeches and policy papers for Marcos and published publications on public affairs. Much later during the Marcos administration, Cristobal headed the Social Security System.

In a statement, the National Press Club mourned the death of Cristobal, calling him "a man of great intellect, and unmistakably, a writer of consequence."

Citing his many public accomplishments, the NPC said Cristobal was mainly a writer: "Mister Cristobal may be many other things—public servant, administrator, academic, presidential adviser, etc., but he was first and last, a writer."

Born on Feb. 20, 1932, Cristobal studied at UP and the University of the East. He gained recognition as a writer at a very young age, winning his first major literary prize—for a short story—when he was 15. At 17, his byline was appearing in the Manila Chronicle, Sunday Times, Saturday Mirror, Free Press and Midweek.

Fictionist, dramatist

"Dropping out of university (possibly because he could not abide pompous professors) he continued his education by reading as widely as he could, and engaging scholars with nationalist bent like Cesar Majul, O.D. Corpuz, Armando Bonifacio, SV Epistola and writers of UP Diliman in discussion and debate," Ordoñez said.

"He became one of the Diliman-based group of writers called the Ravens whose friendship he nurtured to his last moment."

As a fictionist, Cristobal was best tackling historic figures. His most anthologized story is "I, Sulayman," a recreation in stream-of-consciousness of the historic Manila rajah as he prepares to do battle with the Spanish conquistadores.

Cristobal was also a playwright whose most popular drama was one



ADRIAN E. CRISTOBAL: 1932-2007

about the trial of Bonifacio. But his most notorious stage work is a political satire which, however, does not exist anymore: "The Largest Crocodile in the World," which won a prize in the Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature in 1960. No copy of it remains even in the Palanca archives; it is believed that the politician who was the subject of the play's scathing depiction had it stolen.

A leftist intellectual when he was a young man, Cristobal had a consuming interest in Bonifacio, the plebian who founded the Katipunan movement that led the Philippine revolution against Spain. He wrote his last most famous work, "The Tragedy of the Revolution," complaining about the "official neglect" of Bonifacio: "It is ironic ... that among our national heroes, Andres Bonifacio is destitute of a 'Life' in more than one sense: no memoirs, no diaries—his life was cut short." (He was referring to the execution of the Bonifacio brothers in the mountains of Maragondon, Cavite on orders of President Emilio Aguinaldo.)

Cristobal was also an indefatigable literary organizer. He founded the Unyon ng Manunulat na Pilipino (Umpil), a national federation of writers, and was a patron of young writers.

Said Ordoñez: "Raven Raul Ingles remembers Adrian as quite 'generous at heart' to fellow human beings, especial-

ly writers, by providing them with opportunities to pursue their vocation."

But to Ordoñez, Cristobal's most lasting legacy is the UP Creative Writing Center (now the UP Institute of Creative Writing), which he helped found in the 1970s.

"If there is one palpable achievement of Adrian Cristobal in literature, it is the UP Institute of Creative Writing which he initiated as a member of the UP Board of Regents in the late seventies," Ordoñez said. "He made sure it would be an independent unit of the university catering to the needs of writers in their craft not only from campus but from all over the country. National Artist for Literature Francisco Arcellana was the Institute's first Director."

Public intellectual

Cristobal followed a distinguished but vanishing line of writer-thinkers such as I.R. Soliongco, Nick Joaquin, Guillermo de Vega, Lopez, and Mangahas who were public intellectuals in the distinctly Filipino sense of the term—more public than intellectual.

Public intellectuals in the West are mainly academe-based scholars such as Edward Said, Noam Chomsky, and Jurgen Habermas, who sally forth from their university chair, armed with their doctoral cap and toga, to engage in public affairs.

In contrast, Cristobal and the Filipino public intellectuals are mainly journalists and columnists who might have reached college but dropped out. And even if they had a modicum of academic education, their stint in the wild and woolly world of journalism would have made them generalists, not specialists; polemicists and controversialists, pundits.

Public intellectuals in the West have an ideological framework (Said's post-colonial Orientalism, which draws its roots from poststructuralism, Chomsky's libertarian socialism, and Habermas's Neo-Marxism) which they use to frame their views on and responses to public affairs.

In contrast, Cristobal and his ilk have none of the "isms" associated with the academe, except perhaps for nationalism and, especially in the case of

Joaquin, some form of a classic humanism.

This is not to say that Cristobal and the Filipino public intellectuals are less scholarly, less severe. They are thinkers in their own right, and definitely, they have an inimitable if not a more trenchant prose style than their counterparts in the West.

Even Chomsky was highly critical of his likes from the academe. He denounced "intellectual communities" for their snobbery and their academic jargon. He said many scholars are mere "clerks" and he urged the general population to be "anti-intellectual" because academic scholars may be "a special class who are in the business of imposing thoughts, and framing ideas for people in power."

In a way, the more apt Western parallel to Cristobal and Filipino public intellectuals would be the press opinion-makers such as Walter Lippmann, who were eagerly sought by presidents and influential public-policy makers for their counsel and opinion.

Marcos past

In the case of Cristobal, he not only used the pen to influence public policy and decision-making, he also got to join the corridors of power as among the bright and eager young minds drafted by the Marcos administration, which included Francisco Tatad, Juan C. Tuvera, O.D. Corpuz, and Guillermo de Vega.

As head of the Presidential Special Studies Center, Cristobal had a number of top writers in his staff who wrote speeches and policy drafts for Marcos. How they justified the strongman's authoritarian rule would eventually hound most of them, including Cristobal.

Often on the lashing end of writers and critics of the Marcos dictatorship, Cristobal, like many of Marcos' brilliant information men such as Tatad, Gregorio Cendana and Jose Aspiras, was always gracious and did not harbor grudges.

Although known for his acerbic pen and satiric jabs, Cristobal remained friendly and conciliatory to all writers, even if they didn't see eye to eye with him. *With reports from Cynthia Balana and Jerome Aning*



How can we protect them?

— Jaime Cardinal Sin

Villar mum on plot to unseat him

By Dona Pazzibugan

SENATE PRESIDENT MANUEL Villar is keeping quiet amid talk that some of his colleagues are plotting to oust him just five months after he assumed the Senate leadership.

When asked about reports last week of a "coup plot" by senators critical of his leadership style, Villar's staff said the Senate president preferred not to give a comment. They confirmed that he had packed up and left for a holiday abroad with his family.

Villar's critics include members of both the majority bloc and the opposition.

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan played down the grumblings and doubted that the anti-Villar senators could muster at least 12 votes to unseat Villar.

The Senate has 23 members. A majority or at least 12 votes will be needed to unseat him.

Shifting alliances

"There will always be issues raised against the Senate leadership regardless of who sits," said Pangilinan, adding that he did not see any serious reasons for senators to shift alliances at this point.

Sen. Manuel Roxas II, Liberal Party president who belongs to the eight-man Senate minority bloc, has denied that the LP faction initiated moves to replace Villar. But he expressed his discontent with what he called the Senate leadership's "lack of focus."

"There could have been more focus on specific pieces of legislation," he told reporters. He referred to the need to amend the Tax Code and wrap up investigations into government anomalies.

"You saw the results of the investigations, they're pretty much left hanging," he added.

Sen. Gregorio Honasan, who belongs to the 15-man majority bloc, said he remains loyal to Villar and denied reports that he has been approached by the "coup" plotters to convince Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile to assume the Senate presidency.

'Loose talk'

Another member of the minority bloc, Sen. Panfilo Lacson meanwhile described the alleged ouster plot as mere "loose talk."

He said the topic came up during a Christmas dinner party hosted Thursday by Roxas that was attended by four other minority bloc members: Senators Loren Legarda, Benigno Aquino III, Rodolfo Biazon and Ma. Ana Consuelo "Jambay" Madrigal.

"The leadership issue came up in the conversation but that was the end of it. At the end of the day you have to have the numbers. If you don't have 12-13 votes, don't think about it," said Lacson in Tagalog.

Lacson and Madrigal have criticized Villar's insistence on discussing Senate bills and resolutions in closed-door caucuses while discouraging open debates on the floor.

"We want a Senate President who allows free-wheeling debates on the floor, not just in the Executive Lounge," he said.

"Instead of debating an issue, they would just ram through any decision because of their superior numbers," said Madrigal.

Senators Richard Gordon and Edgardo Angara from the majority bloc have also expressed discontent against Villar's leadership in separate interviews.

Gordon had said he was "open" to a change in the Senate leadership and suggested that Enrile, Angara and Pimentel as replacements.



CAPTIVES ARE HOME. Capt. Restituto Bulilan (second from left) leads seven other Filipino seamen upon yesterday's arrival.

ROGER MARGALLO

8 RP seamen home after 45 days with pirates

By Tina G. Santos

THIS COULD BE THE HAPPIEST Christmas for eight of the nine Filipino seamen who were taken hostage by pirates in Somalia two months ago.

Led by Capt. Restituto Bulilan, the seamen returned home via Cathay Pacific flight CX919 at around 4:40 p.m. yesterday.

"Very stressful" was how Bulilan described their 45-day ordeal in the hands of the pirates.

Bulilan narrated that the pirates boarded their vessel around 2 a.m. on Oct. 29, held them at gunpoint and took them to Somalia to Jaira in the Middle East.

"It was very stressful, there

were so many problems, every day there were problems," Bulilan said of their captivity.

One didn't come home

He said he and his crew were mauled, hit by guns and not allowed to talk.

Those taken hostage, besides Bulilan, were Melchor Cayabyab, chief mate; Loreto Quiles, second mate; Raymundo Panaligan, third mate; Mario Ocenar, chief engineer; Adelino Amparo, first engineer; Carlito Lotoc, second engineer; Laureano Villanueva, busson; and Ismael Perez, chief cook.

Quiles was not in the group that returned home. It was not immediately clear why he was

not in the group.

Speaking on behalf of the seven seamen who returned home with him, Bulilan said they were grateful to the officials of the Philippine Embassy for "doing everything to take them home."

No ransom paid?

"Ang alam ko wala (What I know was there was none)," he said when asked if a ransom was paid for their release.

"As far as I'm concerned, it was the owner of the ship who facilitated the release," Bulilan said, adding that they also learned that a US Navy ship had helped.

The nine Filipinos were part of the crew of a Japanese tanker

that was hijacked by pirates on dangerous waters off the coast of Somalia in East Africa.

The 6,253-ton tanker was carrying crew members from Burma, the Philippines and South Korea and up to 40,000 tons of highly explosive benzene.

\$1M ransom demand

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs had said the pirates threatened to kill the crew if a \$1 million ransom was not paid.

Officials at the Department of Foreign Affairs said they had no information on whether or not money changed hands to obtain the release of the Filipino sailors.

Lafayette's last straw: Old row with ex-partner

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE RECENT FINANCIAL woes of Lafayette Philippines Inc. that brought the Australian-owned mine operator to the brink of bankruptcy has its roots in a past dispute between the firm and its supplier, according to officials familiar with the issue.

In an interview, a government mining regulator told the INQUIRER that the "final straw" in Lafayette's troubled financial history was a demand letter sent to it by its business partner, Leighton Contractors Philippines Inc. billing the miner for \$870,000.

"The debt supposedly became due at the end of October [2007] and their supplier declared them in default two weeks later," he said, requesting anonymity because he was not authorized to speak on the issue.

The official said that declaring Lafayette in default was Leighton's prerogative but pointed to an old dispute between both firms dating back to 2005.

New management

Back then, a new management team led by former Agriculture Secretary Carlos Dominguez was appointed by Lafayette's Australian owners to revive the firm's fortunes at its Rapu-Rapu mine after a high-profile accident that had environment activists calling for its permanent closure.

"I understand that the new team displaced Leighton when they came in," the official said, adding that the old dispute could be one reason why Lafayette was declared in default by its former busi-

ness partner so quickly.

For his part, Environment Secretary Lito Atienza pointed out that Lafayette's woes go beyond the disagreement with its business partner, especially since the firm has been trying to raise fresh capital from new investors.

"They've been in talks with prospective investors for some time now," he said. "They need more capital, and negotiations are faltering."

Atienza said his primary concern at this point is to ensure the protection of the environment around the mining facility in the event that the Rapu-Rapu mine ceases operations.

"We need to make sure that the environment is not compromised," he said.

"We've been informed of their status," the Environment and Natural Resources chief added. "We're monitoring the situation closely."

Lafayette was the first foreign firm to operate in the country after the Supreme Court affirmed the legality of the Mining Act in 2004. A high-profile accident in 2005 made the company the focal point of an anti-mining protest which subsided after the government later allowed it to resume operations.

Company officials estimate that the mine could earn up to \$180 million a year, from its gold, silver and copper output, given the strong prices of commodities on the world market. The Rapu-Rapu mine has an estimated life six years, assuming that no other exploration is done in the area.

Lafayette is the largest firm operating in the Bicol region, and is the largest employer.

Banking Schedule for the Holidays:

DECEMBER 24, 2007 (Monday)

OPEN UP TO 2:00 PM

A. Mabini - Bifan Alunan Highway - Tacurong Angeles - Balibago Angeles City - Miranda Antipolo - Masinag Batangas - P. Burgos Better Living Cabanag Cadiz Cabanatuan - Maharlika Road Caceres - Naga Cagayan de Oro - Cogon Calocan Capitol Shopping Bicolod Carmen Planes Cebu - Gorordo Cebu - Magallanes	Cebu - Tabunok CM Recto - Lipa Cogon - Cagayan de Oro Dagupan - Fernandez Dagupan - Perez Davao - Magayssay Davao - Rizal Digos - Rizal Avenue Dipolog - Quezon Avenue Dumaguete EDSA Cubao Enriquez - Lucena Fuent - Osmena General Santos - Santiago Grace Park - 8th Avenue Iligan - Del Pilar	Iloilo - Ledesma Isabela - Santiago La Union La Union - San Fernando Laoag - Balintawak St. Laoag - Castro Lapasan - Cagayan de Oro Legaspi City Lipa Lipa - Rotonda Lucena Magallanes St. - Surigao Makabao - Colabato Malabon Malolos - Congreso Marikina	Meycauayan - Zamora Montilla - Butuan Naga Navotas North Calamba - Crossing North Mardaus Olongapo - Rizal Avenue Ozamiz City P. Burgos - Batangas City Palawan Pasig Pioneer St. - General Santos R. Alunan - Koronadal Rizal Avenue Rizal St. - Zamboanga San Carlos - Negros Occidental	San Fernando - Pampanga Dolores San Pedro Sta. Ana - Davao City Subic - Times Square Taboan Tobara Tuguegarao - Rizal Avenue Tuguegarao - Rizal St. Tarlac Tarlac - F. Tañedo Toril - Davao City Tuguegarao - Bonifacio St. Urdaneta Vigan - Quezon Avenue
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OPEN UP TO 3:00 PM - All SM Mall & Dept. Store branches plus the following branches:

Baclaran Baguio - Abnaso Square Mall Big R Novales Bonifacio Global City	Cabanatuan - Megacentr Mall Cash & Carry Cebu - Ayala Center Cebu - Elizabeth Mall	Greenhills Shopping Center New Farmers Plaza Robinson's Galleria Robinson's Metro East	Robinson's Place - Lipa Robinson's Place - Manila Rockwell Shangri-La Plaza Mall	Sta. Lucia East - Cainta V - Mall
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OPEN UP TO 6:00 PM - NAIA & NAIA 1

DECEMBER 29, 2007 (Saturday)

REGULAR BANKING HOURS - All Saturday banking branches and Baguio - Abnaso Square

OPEN UP TO 2:00 PM

Calocan Grace Park - 8th Avenue	Harrison Plaza M. de Santos - Ilaya	Manggahan Ortigas Avenue - Pasig	Pedro Gil - Singalong Quintin Paredes
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DECEMBER 30, 2007 (Sunday)

OPEN UP TO 2:00 PM

Calocan Century Park - Adriatico	Grace Park - 8th Avenue Navotas	Rizal Avenue Sta. Cristo Commercial
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OPEN UP TO 3:00 PM - All Sunday banking branches and Cabanatuan - Mega Center Mall

OPEN UP TO 6:00 PM - NAIA & NAIA 1

DECEMBER 31, 2007 (Monday)

OPEN UP TO 2:00 PM

A. Mabini - Bifan Agdao - Davao City Angeles - Balibago Angeles City - Miranda Batangas - P. Burgos Cabanatuan - Maharlika Road Cagayan de Oro - Cogon Calocan Capitol Shopping Bicolod Carmen Planes Cebu - Gorordo Cebu - Magallanes Cebu - Tabunok CM Recto - Davao City	CM Recto - Lipa Dagupan - Fernandez Dagupan - Perez Davao - Lizada Davao - Rizal Digos - Rizal Avenue Dipolog - Quezon Avenue Dumaguete EDSA Cubao Fuent - Osmena General Luna - Naga General Santos - Santiago Isabela - Santiago Izart - Iloilo	Kumintang - Batangas City La Union La Union - San Fernando Laoag - Balintawak St. Laoag - Castro Lipa Lipa - Rotonda Lucena Makabao - Colabato Malolos - Congreso Marcos Highway Sumulong Marikina Mayor Jaldon - Zamboanga City Meycauayan - Zamora	Montilla - Butuan Naga - General Luna North Calamba - Crossing North Mardaus Olongapo - Rizal Avenue Ozamiz City Palawan Pioneer St. - General Santos Quezon Avenue - Iligan Quezon Avenue - Lucena R. Alunan - Koronadal Rizal St. - Legaspi City San Carlos - Negros Occidental San Fernando - Pampanga	San Fernando - Pampanga Dolores San Pedro Subic - Times Square Taboan Tuguegarao - Rizal Avenue Tuguegarao - Rizal St. Tarlac Tarlac - F. Tañedo Tuguegarao - Bonifacio St. Urdaneta Vigan - Quezon Avenue
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OPEN UP TO 3:00 PM - All SM Mall & Dept. Store branches plus the following branches:

Baclaran Baguio - Abnaso Square Mall Bonifacio Global City Cabanatuan - Mega Center Mall	Cash & Carry Cebu - Ayala Center Cebu - Elizabeth Mall New Farmers Plaza	Robinson's Galleria Robinson's Metro East Robinson's Place - Lipa Robinson's Place - Manila	Rockwell Shangri-La Plaza Mall Sta. Lucia East - Cainta Tubatan	Tubatan Center Mall - CM Recto V - Mall
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Church, Palace, SMC haggle over price of Sumilao land

By Michael Lim Ubac
and Jerome Aning

MALACAÑANG IS WORKING alongside the Church to settle the land dispute in Sumilao, Bukidnon, Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Sergio Apostol said yesterday.

Apostol said the farmers, who had walked 1,700 kilometers to Manila to press their claim to a 144-hectare property, could take comfort in the thought that President Macapagal-Arroyo's "intention" in ordering the Department of Agrarian Reform to reclassify the land was precisely to award it to them.

According to Apostol, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales are separately "talking" with officials of San Miguel Corp., parent company of the current landowner, San Miguel Foods Inc.

"In fact, what I know is Cardinal Rosales is working on that also," he said in a phone interview.

Rosales, a former bishop of Malaybalay, Bukidnon, has long been backing the Sumilao farmers in their claim to the property.

Apostol said all 144 hectares would be distributed to the farmers, and that the ongoing negotiations were centered on "how much will be paid to SMC" under the "just compensation" principle.

"If SMC agrees, we can expedite the giving of the land," he said.

Asked whether SMC was insisting on retaining a portion of the land, where a hog farm is being built, Apostol said the entire property was up for distribution:

"Walang matitira (Nothing will be left)."

The 55 farmers return today to their native San Vicente in Sumilao after staying for three weeks in Manila to plead their case.

"We shall be taking our fight back to Sumilao because the President has assured us that our land will be ours, and the Church promised to take care of our cause here," said Napoleon Merida Jr., one of the farmers' leaders.

Nothing definite

Apostol said Malacañang was working to implement the President's order to reclassify the disputed property from agro-industrial to agricultural use, paving the way for its reversion to the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

"That's what we're trying to do," said Apostol, who was present when Ms Arroyo met last week with six representatives of the farmers in Malacañang.

But "there is no definite development yet," he said.

Following Ms Arroyo's executive order, Apostol said, "the procedure, once you put the land under CARP is to fix the market value."

"Then you have to check who are the tenants entitled [to be awarded the land]," he said.

The next step is for the DAR to survey the lots that will be allocated for each tenant, Apostol said.

"[Finally], you have to sign a contract. So this is all procedural," he said, adding that giving the land back to the legitimate farmer-claimants was to be expected in the coming months.

Apostol, however, did not present a timetable for the procedure to be completed.

SMFI has the option to appeal the executive order before Ms Arroyo or the courts.

5:30 a.m. flight

The farmers left San Vicente on Oct. 10, traversing more than a dozen provinces.

They reached the outskirts of Metro Manila on Dec. 3 and set up camp in front of the DAR central office in Quezon City three days later.

They are to leave Villamor Air Base at 5:30 a.m. today on board a C-130 plane offered by the government that would take them to Cagayan de Oro City.

In Cagayan de Oro, they will be welcomed by civil society members and Church officials led by Archbishop Antonio Ledesma. A convoy will later take them back to Sumilao.

The farmers were lodged at the Ateneo de Manila University in Quezon City after dismantling their camp at the DAR on Friday.

They spent yesterday at the Ateneo discussing "internal concerns" and speaking with their lawyers and supporters, according to media coordinator Josel Gonzales.

Lawyer Arlene Bag-ao of the legal support group Balaod Mindanao, who participated in the march, said the farmers would initiate a dialogue with DAR officials in Bukidnon to formally hasten the CARP process.

Bag-ao said the farmers wanted the process completed quickly so they would get their beneficiary papers soon.

"If the government is serious

in fulfilling its promise, we don't think it will require eight months to one year," she said. "We are agrarian reform advocates and are familiar with the DAR process. So we know this can be done faster."

'As good as given'

Merida said that after the dialogue with the President on Dec. 17, he and his comrades regarded "as good as given" the reclassification of the property and the issuance of the notice of CARP coverage.

"We believe there are no more barriers to our getting our land back," he told the INQUIRER.

Merida, 24, took part in the 2-month walk along with his father Napoleon Sr., three siblings, an uncle and two cousins.

They and the other farmers are members or descendants of the indigenous Higaonon people who worked on the disputed estate formerly owned by Norberto Quisumbing.

The farmers argue that the land should be covered by the CARP and distributed to them because neither Quisumbing nor SMFI complied with the conversion of the property into an agro-industrial park that would benefit all residents of Sumilao.

The DAR has ruled that the hog farm was not part of the original conversion plan, which was upheld in 1999 by the Supreme Court, and which SMFI had five years to complete.

Bishop's letter

Another Catholic prelate, Malaybalay Bishop Honesto Pacana, has asked Ms Arroyo to issue a more concrete directive on the Sumilao case that will in-

clude a cease-and-desist order to SMFI.

"Much as the Diocese of Malaybalay and the Sumilao farmers would want to celebrate such a significant event, however, I am apprehensive about its tenor and implications," Pacana said in a letter to the President, referring to her executive order.

"The unabated construction of buildings makes the order practically useless, to say the least," he said.

A copy of Pacana's letter has been sent to Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman.

Pacana also wanted a clarification of the computation of the five-year period given in the law to developers in land conversion orders.

He said he found worrisome a DAR statement that the five-year period of SMFI to develop the Sumilao property for agro-industrial use extended until 2009.

"This interpretation, I believe, defeats the very purpose of the [CARP], which is to maximize the full potential of our land for the benefit of our farmers," Pacana said.

In an interview over Catholic-run Radio Veritas, Pacana said the diocese of Malaybalay was happy to welcome back the Higaonon farmers from Sumilao.

"It's great that they are coming back this time because their families are waiting for them. They have been away for quite some time. The whole church here is very supportive of them," Pacana said.

CARP extension

A side issue in the farmers' visit to Manila is their expres-

sion of support to the renewal and extension of the CARP, which is being backed by Malacañang, the DAR and the militant group Akbayan.

Funding for the CARP ends in June 2008, with the expiration of the law that created it. Congress is currently hearing a number of bills to renew, revise or even replace the CARP.

Akbayan Rep. Risa Hontiveros earlier said the farmers should at least be issued their certificates of land ownership award before the expiration of the CARP law.

If the CARP is extended, loopholes must be plugged so that what happened to the Sumilao farmers will not happen again to other farmers, she said.

But Hontiveros drew criticism from the militant farmers group Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, which wants the CARP scrapped and replaced by the "Genuine Agrarian Reform Bill" it is pushing in Congress.

"What happened to the Sumilao farmers is just the tip of the Philippine land problem, and they all happened under the CARP," said KMP chair Rafael Mariano.

He said the situation of landless farmers would only get worse if the CARP were extended.

"Even if the Sumilao farmers get the full 144 hectares they are fighting for through a deal between the unholy alliance of the government and landlords, what about the majority of peasants who still do not own the land they till? Under the CARP they will still be landless," Mariano said. *With a report from Beverly T. Natidad*

Jalosjos flees to Dapitan; justice secretary orders his arrest

From page A1

heard Jalosjos "just wanted to spend the whole day with his family."

"This is unauthorized," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye quoted Gonzalez as saying after news broke that Jalosjos had left for Dapitan.

Caught by surprise

Other Malacañang officials appeared or sounded like they were also caught flat-footed.

"I don't know about it," Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Sergio Apostol said when told about the latest turn of events. Apostol said the Palace was leaving the Jalosjos issue to the justice department.

Prison officials caused an uproar last week when they announced that Jalosjos was being released after receiving a discharge order signed by

NBP head Supt. Juanito Leopando.

Roadblocks set up

Malacañang immediately said that it had not authorized Jalosjos' release and Gonzalez ordered NBP officials to continue to keep the former congressman in custody.

Connie Lactuan, a staff member of the Dapitan City information bureau, confirmed Jalosjos' arrival in Dapitan, saying the ex-congressman visited City Hall around 7 p.m.

"I saw him here at the City Hall accompanied by Mayor Dominador Jalosjos," Lactuan said, referring to Jalosjos' brother.

"Roadblocks were put up at the road leading to the City Hall and policemen and civilian security escorts were deployed," said an official, who asked not to be identified.

The source said that after an hour at City Hall, where he talked with "joyful supporters," Jalosjos immediately left for his island resort of Dakak, off Dapitan.

Flight legal

"His exit from the Bilibid was legal," Agolung said, claiming the release order which Jalosjos had previously received was never revoked.

Gonzalez had disputed Jalosjos' release order and the former congressman's claim that he was no longer a prisoner because the order releasing him had not been revoked.

"That release order has never been released, so there's nothing to revoke. What he has is a xerox copy of the release order," Gonzalez said on Wednesday.

Jalosjos was convicted in 1997 for statutory rape and sentenced to two life terms. His vic-

tim was an 11-year-old girl.

With escorts

There were conflicting reports on what time Jalosjos actually arrived in Zamboanga del Norte.

Jalosjos flew to Dapitan at 11:30 a.m. on a private plane, his secretary said in a phone interview.

"He left via the domestic airport yesterday morning. He was fetched by his escorts from the NBP reservation," Susan Sespene said.

Asked if there was permission from the Department of Justice or the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) for Jalosjos to go home to Dapitan for Christmas, Sespene said there was none.

"There was no revocation of the order, no court declaring the release order null and void. That is why he decided to go home for Christmas," she

explained.

President Macapagal-Arroyo in April commuted to 16 years the two life terms Jalosjos had received for statutory rape.

The disputed release order signed by Leopando last week was based on computation of the time Jalosjos had served, counting allowance for good behavior. But the computation was questioned by DOJ officials.

Since the commutation of his sentence, Jalosjos had been enjoying the status a "living out" prisoner, which meant he was free to roam the 300-hectare NBP reservation as long as he reported to prison officials in the morning and in the evening.

The INQUIRER tried to contact BuCor Director Ricardo Dapit but his cellular phone was turned off. Calls to Leopando's

office went unanswered.

Sespene said Jalosjos's sudden trip home was without the knowledge of the BuCor and the NBP.

"He is free, after all. This was not coordinated with the BuCor and the NBP," she said.

Sespene also said that if the authorities ordered Jalosjos to return to the national penitentiary, he would do so without resistance.

Sespene said Jalosjos's legal team would also push through with filing a case in court asking authorities to respect the release order.

Jalosjos was uncowed by Gonzalez's threat to arrest him.

"I'm ready to be arrested," he said in an interview, according to GMA News.

Some of Jalosjos' supporters in Dapitan vowed to stage a "people power" to prevent his arrest, GMA News said.

Latin hymns sung in Masses in Pampanga

From page A1

or of the shepherds that kept vigil during the birth of Jesus Christ, said Arwin Paul Lingat, a member of the parish's liturgy committee who also works as a researcher for the center.

"The songs were eventually collectively named as such by residents," he said.

In the 4:30 a.m. Mass on Monday, the repertoire included the Kyrie (Lord, Have Mercy), Gloria (Glory to God in the Highest), Credo (Apostle's Creed), Sanctus (Holy) and Agnus Dei (Lamb of God). The hymns were in Latin, except for Kyrie, which was in Greek.

The rest of the songs were in Filipino and in English.

In a phone interview, Pampanga Bishop Pablo Virgilio David said the Archdiocese of San Fernando "tolerates the Latin hymns for as long as the songs for the entrance, communion and recessional are in Filipino, Kapampangan or English [so they could be sung by the congregation]."

"It is basically the charm of the songs that makes the people listen to them," David said.

Members of the Our Lady of Divine Grace parish choir have been rehearsing daily for the Masses. An organist, two violinists, a flutist and a choir master accompany the 20 singers, aged 15 to 38. This

shows that the tradition has been passed on to the younger generations.

Their training for singing the Latin hymns starts early, said Sheena Len Policarpio, 20. She was 9 years old when she joined the chorale and was taught the hymns when she was 12.

"On Christmas Eve, all of our three choirs [the two others are the Mabalcacat parish choir and Early Morning choir] will be combined for the pastorella. We would all be more than 50 [singers] by then," said Policarpio.

Oral tradition

The pastorella exists to this day as part of the town's oral tradition, Tantingco said.

Its roots stemmed from several possibilities. It could have been introduced by the Augustinian Recoletos, the native clergy or by the musical composers among lay people.

Pablo Palma, a composer from Bacolor town, composed the Stabat Mater in four versions. The current musical sheets in Mabalcacat bear no name of their composers, however.

"What is known is that Alejandro de Leon of Angeles City, our previous choir master, rearranged the compositions in 1972 [to provide more instrumentalizations and give the choir some rest in between singing]."

said Bonifacio Gafia, 38, a choir member for 21 years.

It also persisted because elder musicians were not selfish.

These veteran musicians—known only by their nicknames like Apung (Elder) Pacing, Totang, Dodie, Sendong and Carting—trained secondliners, including the current organist, Carla Castro. The current choir master is Dr. Reggie Layug.

The archdiocese has no document either on the pastorella's beginnings or in which towns it is currently practiced, said Fr. Oliver Yalung, head of the liturgy commission.

Professor Lino Dizon of the Center for Tarlaqueño Studies, which has been writing on the missions of the Recoletos (calced or shod friars) in Mabalcacat and Tarlac's Bamban and Concepcion towns, has no available archival documents on the role of that religious order in the pastorella.

Bamboo organ creator

Their penchant for music is indicated through Fr. Diego Cera who, some months after his assignment here in 1977, created the world-famous bamboo organ in Las Pifias.

It cannot also be said, though, that the pastorella was mainly a legacy of the Recoletos, who served this northern Pampanga town from 1725 to 1898.

"Years ago, the pastorella was sung in Augustinian (disclaled or barefoot missionaries) territories, like San Fernando and Bacolor," Tantingco said.

The pastorella has also been a tradition in the western town of Sta. Rita because the old singers are still around, according to Recy Pineda, one of the musical directors of the ArtiSta. Rita.

"It never stopped being sung by the old *tiples* (singers) and now with commentators and lectors," she said.

Old residents in Betis keep the pastorella alive on selected occasions.

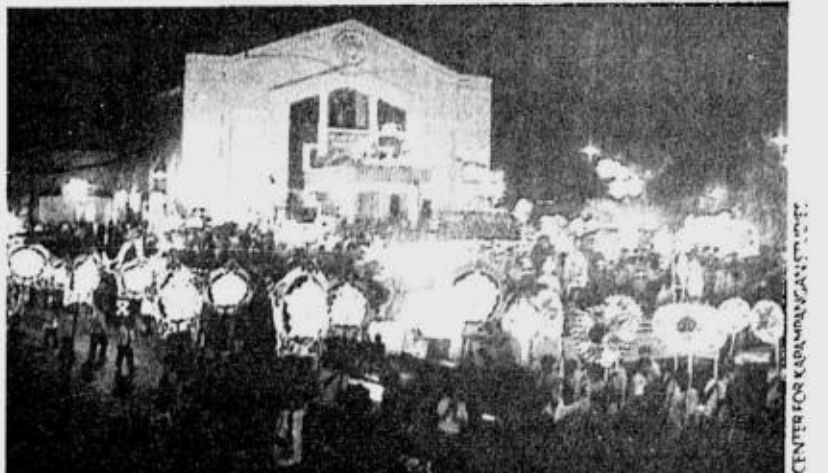
Keeping the faithful awake

What was certain was that Latin, the language used in Masses before 1965, was the medium through which the hymns evolved, it was learned.

To Tantingco, the aim was clear: "The friars possibly used it as a technique to keep the faithful awake during dawn Masses."

Tantingco said the pastorella used to be done in "very operatic" style. "It seemed like you were watching an Italian opera," he said.

What makes Mabalcacat's pastorella unique is that it is preceded by the *lubenas* (a corruption of the word *novena*). These are hand-held lanterns accompanying the processions of the patron saints of villages during *simbang bengi* (night Masses).



A PROCESSION of hand-held lanterns, called the "lubenas," precedes the dawn Mass at the Our Lady of Divine Grace Parish Church in Mabalcacat, Pampanga, where Latin hymns or "pastorellas" are sung.

"So the Catholics here double their sleep deprivation by staying up late for the *lubenas* and waking up early for the dawn Mass. I think it is flesh mortification in preparation for the Feast of Nativity," said Tantingco.

New feature

The parish priest, Ignacio Carlos, wants to add a new feature to the pastorella. "Aside from hearing the Latin hymns, I want our parishioners to appreciate these through dances," he said.

His stint has seen the church in a real Christmas mood. Lanterns made of *papel de japon* or capiz festooned the church interiors. An advent wreath and a manger grace both sides of the altar.

Carmelita Garcia-Flake, 74, regards herself as the lone surviving *tiple* in her batch.

Coming from the United States, she sat at the choir loft

on Monday and observed: "They do not sing the pastorella with much passion."

Her batch, she said, learned the pastorella from Fr. Victor Serrano, a native of Mabalcacat.

Music composer Cris Cadilang, a former priest, said based on talk he had with members of various choral groups, the pastorella is "alive" in Mabalcacat, Barangay Balibago in Angeles City and Sta. Rita.

Violins and cello

To him, that means that out of the more than 90 parishes in Pampanga, only three continue with the pastorella.

Garcia-Flake said that in older times, violins, cello, accordion and tambourine accompanied the pastorella.

The musicians then, she said, belonged to prominent clans in the town.

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At 75, doctor is longest-serving active medical volunteer

From page A1

ber to a packed audience of surgeons at the Coral Ballroom of the Manila Pavilion, where he lectured on volunteerism as part of a postgraduate course at the University of the Philippines College of Medicine.

That's a year shy of the age's most famous volunteer, died in 1965, after 53 years as a medical missionary in the jungles of Lambarene (Gabon), Africa.

Personal philosophies

Schweitzer—philosopher, theologian, musician, mission doctor and Nobel laureate—was guided by a personal philosophy of "reverence for life," an ethical principle involving all living things, which he considered essential to the future of civilization.

De Villa's volunteer work is energized by his own mission verse:

"Kung pagmunimuhin ko at basahin sa isip/ Bakit tayo nari to sa ibabaw ng daigdig?/ Ang buhay ba natin ay atin lamang at pansarili?/ O dapat nating ito'y ibahagi sa mga maralitang nakararamil!"

(If I ponder our purpose on this Earth/Is our life for ourselves alone/Or should we share it with the many who are poor?)

Indeed, his wake-up call to his fellow doctors, especially the young ones, to continually give free services to the most impoverished and least accessible segments of Philippine society is as resonant as ever.

Country boy

A gifted surgeon and teacher, De Villa is a country boy at heart.

He graduated valedictorian from the San Juan Elementary School in San Juan, Batangas, and the Batangas Eastern Academy, a secondary school cofounded by his mother, Mercedes Salud de Villa.

After high school, he entered UP, where he completed a pre-medical course in 1951 and a medical degree in 1956.

De Villa belonged to the illustrious Batch 1956 of the UP College of Medicine, which, owing to the large number of excellent applicants then, was the biggest batch ever enrolled in the college's postwar history, until the advent of the seven-year Integrated Liberal Arts and Medicine Program.

Counted among the 99 graduates, who marked their golden jubilee last year, are some of the trailblazers and most revered mentors in the medical community.

De Villa himself has many remarkable years behind him as fellow of the Philippine College of Surgeons and American College of Surgeons, life member of the Philippine Medical Association, and former professor of surgery at UP Manila.

But he took the road less taken.

Anatomy teacher

Unlike many of his co-graduates who immediately proceeded to residency training, De Vil-



DE VILLA, in this 1976 photo, does abdominal palpation on a patient while she stands because there was no examining table then in Parasilis, Bontoc. Looking on is a student nurse of the Integrated Volunteer Services of the Philippines.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

la was "accidentally" recruited into the faculty of the UP College of Medicine's anatomy department.

A classmate had submitted his resumé without his knowledge, and thereupon he found himself teaching full-time for the next six years. During this period, he had a yearlong stint as a fellow in histology at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York.

One summer in his hometown, the dashing and sideburns-sporting anatomy teacher met the beautiful Lourdes Hoover, a daughter of an American drilling contractor and student of home economics at Centro Escolar University in Manila.

She became his dance partner at the ball during the town fiesta and, during the year that he was in New York for his studies, the two wrote to each other daily without fail.

They were soon formally engaged.

It was only after his marriage to Lourdes in 1961 that De Villa came to realize that he could not keep a family on a teacher's earnings.

Thus, in 1962, he started his residency training in surgery at the Philippine General Hospital.

It took another five years of juggling duties as college teacher and hospital consultant before he was able to embark on his own practice.

Lost job

His residency completed, an offer to work as a doctor and executive of a major multinational company in Mindanao came De Villa's way. But suddenly, his widowed mother was stricken with pneumonia.

After treating his moth-

er—and losing the job opportunity—he wondered what would happen to her if she took ill again. And so he decided to stay in Manila to hone his practice, starting out in a small clinic on Taft Avenue.

Eventually, De Villa was invited to join Medical Center Manila as consultant-investor. That was in 1970, and to this day, he is consultant in surgery at that hospital. As his private practice flourished, he also took on duties at the Makati Medical Center as visiting doctor, the Emilio Aguinaldo College of Medicine as associate dean, and PGH as assistant director for health operations.

Call to serve

In spite of medical appointments, teaching and administrative duties, and family commitments, De Villa heeded the call to serve the poor.

In 1967, he cofounded the Kapisanan ng mga Anak ng Kalayaan (KAK) together with then PGH surgical resident Romeo Intengan, who later joined the Society of Jesus and eventually became its provincial superior.

The KAK's opening salvo was a weekly medical clinic at Puting Bato in Tondo, Manila. The volunteers included PGH residents and medical and nursing students.

Tondo was where, during his residency, De Villa witnessed in a ramshackle hut a former patient boiling two pieces of kamoteng kahoy, which was to be her and her three children's first meal of the day at 10 a.m. The woman's husband was then at the pier, hoping to earn the money that would buy the family's supper of rice and dried fish.

"I was so saddened that then

and there, I vowed to help and serve the poor for as long as I physically can, should I succeed in my private practice," De Villa recalled.

Sure enough, the Tondo mission was followed by other free clinics in Caloocan, Marikina, Quezon City, Carmona (Cavite) and Montalban (Rizal).

In Marikina, with the help of the nuns of St. Scholastica's Academy, the Tuason Community Center Foundation was established. De Villa served there as volunteer doctor in 1969-72, and trustee in 1969-90.

IVSP

A high point in De Villa's advocacy work was the formation in 1975 of the Integrated Volunteer Services of the Philippines. Its acronym, IVSP, also stood for its motto: "I Vow to Serve the People."

This hugely popular study-service program, which he founded with some friends, enlisted volunteers from the colleges of medicine, dentistry, nursing and veterinary medicine of UP and other universities and colleges.

In the IVSP, teams of students were fielded to remote barangays in various provinces for four weeks during the summer.

They reached such places as Lubang, Marang and Talim Islands, Marang in Marinduque, and Butigui in Mt. Province. They treated the sick, did dental work, engaged in community nursing, vaccinated cattle, and organized barangay projects while living with foster families.

After only two years, De Villa lamented, "[the] IVSP died a natural death ... due to poverty." But it would be the model and precursor of the present UP

Manila Students Summer Immersion Program.

Dean of jungle surgery

Never discouraged, De Villa continued to organize missions on his own.

His ability to perform life-saving surgery under the direst circumstances soon led his colleagues and former students to dub him the "dean of jungle surgery."

Declared one of his former students, Dr. Armand Crisostomo, an accomplished colorectal surgeon: "Doctor De Villa has the widest experience [in medical-surgical missions]. He can perform and innovate under the most difficult, strenuous and even primitive circumstances."

Mission teams came home with stories of performing surgery under the trees, in a nipa hut, or in the corridor of a building, sterilizing instruments without benefit of running water, substituting paper for drapes or fresh coconut juice for distilled water, medical doctors doing the work of dentists, doctors swatting swarms of flies, dogs biting doctors ...

For all that, the medical teams had a "very, very low" mortality rate.

Thus, there were also stories of grateful barrio folk presenting the doctors a meal that required slaughtering the family's prized hen, or basket upon basket of farm produce, or the willing services of their kin as household help.

Blood brother

One of De Villa's favorite stories is how he became a "blood brother" of a Muslim patient in Jolo, who went into shock after surgery performed by residents.

Because he was the only one with Type A blood in the immediate vicinity, De Villa donated his own blood, telling everyone not to say a word about it to avoid any issues.

Nevertheless, word went around. And before the team left, the governor personally thanked De Villa, saying lightly that he was now a blood brother of a Muslim clan.

De Villa's volunteer spirit has brought him as far as Cook Islands as a World Health Organization volunteer surgeon, and South Africa.

His trailblazing work in organized medical volunteerism did not go unnoticed.

In June 1976, he was chosen the Philippines' representative to the First International Symposium in Volunteerism held in Vienna, Austria. There, he met kindred souls from all over the world who were then preoccupied with adopting a common definition for volunteerism.

'Pahinungod'

Back home, it would take many more years before medical volunteerism would reach a tipping point.

In the 1990s, a study conducted by Dr. Ledivina Cariño and Dr. Ma. Luisa Doronila, both UP professors, showed that social commitment did not register as an important part of the value system of UP students.

This so perturbed UP officials that they decided to do something about it.

The UP Ugnayan ng Pahinungod—a university-wide program that institutionalized volunteerism among UP constituents through the rendering of free services to communities in greatest need—was established in 1994, during the term of UP president Emil Q. Javier.

It is the country's first university-based formal volunteer service program.

According to Cariño, founding director of the UP System Ugnayan ng Pahinungod, the program allowed De Villa and his team "to concentrate on their caring service."

To date, Pahinungod Manila has reached 50 provinces from Abra to Tawi-Tawi, deployed 770 missions, and mobilized 5,000 volunteers.

It has benefited more than 175,000 Filipinos through its volunteer programs in education, health, welfare, advocacy and research.

De Villa's campaign is for Pahinungod to be replicated by other hospitals. "I wish that the culture of volunteerism inspired by Pahinungod would continue to grow and be perpetuated," he said.

For his vision and zeal, De Villa was conferred the Natatanging Pahinungod award by UP Manila in 1995. In 1999, he received the Community Service Award from the UP Alumni Association, and in 2006, the Community Service Award from the UP Medical Alumni Society.

Side effects

"There's no question that volunteering has its side effects," De Villa said. The most serious of these are neglect of family and loss of income, he said.

"To charge fees is not a right [of doctors]," he added. "It is only a privilege incidental to the privilege of private practice. To have someone put his life in your hands is a privilege."

On a humorous note, De Villa said his wife Lourdes had more than once threatened to set the PGH on fire to keep him at home more often.

But actually, Lourdes, a model homemaker and mother of their five children, now all successful professionals, has learned to enjoy volunteer work herself. She sometimes accompanies her husband on his medical missions and, for the past 15 years, has been giving time and resources to the PGH auxiliary store which helps indigent patients.

According to De Villa, there is enough time for volunteer work if one has the desire and will. On top of that, when patients are benefited, volunteers get "a soul-lifting sense of accomplishment and fulfillment."

He added: "[Volunteer work is character-building. It is challenging adventure. It is free tourism, being not all work but also rest and recreation. It is tiresome but enjoyable work. It is compatible with private practice, teaching, family life and sports. Try it.]"

GMA, Panlilio meet in Mass: Peace be with you

From page A1

At breakfast later, however, Ms Arroyo did not talk to Panlilio, whose claim he received P500,000 in Malacañang on Oct. 11 fueled yet another corruption and bribery controversy to engulf her administration. Their meeting here was the first since the Palace cash gifts scandal.

"It was mutual," Panlilio said of his exchange of peace greetings with the President, who sat beside Buhay Rep. Carissa Coscolluela and Pangasinan Rep. Rachel Arenas on the front pew of the Metropolitan Cathedral during the 4 a.m. Mass.

Panlilio and Rodriguez later accompanied Ms Arroyo toward the plaza, where the giant lanterns of the villages of Telabastagan and San Felipe were displayed.

Ms Arroyo, a native of Lubao town, was heard telling Coscolluela and Arenas how lanterns were made and how these were

able to give out patterns of blinking lights.

It was a different scene altogether during breakfast at City Hall's Plaza de Arrozal across the church.

Ms Arroyo and Panlilio, with San Fernando Archbishop Paciano Aniceto seated between them, did not talk to each other during the entire 30 minutes that they were together.

The President appeared to be addressing everyone in that table for 10 people, except Panlilio, although the priest-turned-politician was seen nodding politely as Ms Arroyo spoke.

Show of courtesy

Panlilio said that as a show of courtesy, he did not initiate a conversation with Ms Arroyo.

"We were talking as a group," he said, adding that he did not want to judge the President's attitude toward him that morning.

In the still unresolved Mala-

cañang gift-giving issue, Panlilio said he had not called the handouts bribe money or identified Ms Arroyo as its source.

On Oct. 11, Ms Arroyo met around 90 congressmen over breakfast and later 200 local government officials at lunch in the midst of a new impeachment attempt that her allies in Congress quickly killed subsequently.

During the Nov. 14 inquiry of the Senate's blue ribbon committee, Panlilio testified that he considered the money to be illegally disbursed because no one had shown strong proof of its source.

Official sources in Pampanga said Panlilio had earned the ire of Ms Arroyo because of his revelation. But the governor said he hoped that was not true.

The way to God

"I deeply appreciate it that she joined us, her kabalén (provincemates) in the Mass," Panlilio said.

Ms Arroyo has regularly attended dawn Masses celebrating Christmas here since 2001.

In his homily, Aniceto reminded Catholics that the "way to God was not through the power of this world but through the simplicity of life, obedience to the will of God and humility."

Without referring to anyone, the 70-year-old prelate said: "There is hope and the way to hope is by dialogue. That is our responsibility to Christ's community."

By 10 a.m., Ms Arroyo led inaugural rites for Nayong Pilipino sa Clark at the Expo Pilipino inside the Clark Freeport.

She was supposed to lead the opening of the park on Nov. 30. The Nayong Pilipino Foundation advised Ms Arroyo to cancel the plan due to an expected bad weather, not because of the standoff that Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV had led at the Peninsula Manila a day before her scheduled visit here.



PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo and Pampanga Gov. Eddie Panlilio offer each other greetings of peace at a dawn Mass at the Metropolitan Cathedral in the City of San Fernando in Pampanga.

TONETTE ORGAS/INQUIRER CENTRAL LUZON

SC reverses La Salle expulsion of 3 frat men

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE SUPREME COURT HAS OVERTURNED the decision of De La Salle University expelling three students for their involvement in fraternity-related violence 12 years ago.

In its Dec. 19 ruling, the tribunal added that while DLSU had the power to decide who to admit into their school, the penalty of expulsion it earlier meted to James Paul Bungubung, Richard Reverente and Roberto Valdes Jr. was "too harsh."

While the school had the right to drop them from the rolls for being "undesirable," they must issue them proper transfer credentials, the court said.

The high court also directed DLSU to issue a certificate of graduation to a fourth student implicated in the mauling of members of a rival fraternity in 1995, Alvin Aguilar, because he was able to show that he was at Camp Crame in Quezon City

at the time of the incident.

Aguilar and the other students had gone to court to question the decision of the DLSU-College of Saint Benilde Joint Disciplinary Board to expel them for the two mauling incidents involving students James Yap, Dennis Pascual, Ericson Cano and Michael Perez.

A Manila regional trial court had issued a preliminary injunction against the implementation of the board's decision, thus allowing the students to enroll. This was overturned by the Court of Appeals in 1996 but the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) issued a resolution the same year disapproving the school's decision.

The DLSU then petitioned the Supreme Court to ask whether the CHED had the legal authority to review the university's decisions on disciplinary actions, and whether the DLSU was right in expelling the students.

The high court upheld the resolution of CHED and said the university's freedom to discipline its students does not give them the untrammelled right to impose a penalty which is not commensurate with the gravity of the misdeed.

It pointed out that the two mauling incidents lasted for just a few seconds, and the victims did not suffer serious injury. But the penalty of expulsion would forever taint the students' records, it added.

"Disciplinary measures especially where they involve suspension, dismissal or expulsion, cut significantly into the future of the student. They attach to him for life and become a mortgage of his future, hardly redeemable in certain cases. Officials of colleges and universities must be anxious to protect it, conscious of the fact that, appropriately construed, a disciplinary action should be treated as an educational tool rather than a punitive measure," it said.

Schedule of healing Masses

THE HEALING MASSES OF FR. FERNANDO SUAREZ will be held this month and in January in churches and other venues nationwide.

The schedule is as follows: today, 9 a.m. at SM Megamall; Dec. 27, 5:15 p.m., San Sebastian Cathedral, Tarlac City; Dec. 28, 2 p.m., St. Therese Parish, Dagupan City; Dec. 29, 3 p.m., Basilica of Our Lady of Charity, Agoo, La Union; Dec. 30, 1 p.m., St. William de Hermit Cathedral, San Fernando, La Union; Dec. 31, 9 a.m., Our Lady of Atonement Cathedral, Baguio City;

Jan. 3, 5:30 p.m., St. Clement's Church, La Paz, Iloilo; Jan. 4, 6 p.m., St. Joseph the Worker Parish, Jaro, Iloilo; Jan. 5, 2 p.m., Capiz Gym, Roxas City; Jan. 7, 9:30 a.m., Holy Rosary Parish, Balabang (Boracay), Aklan;

Jan. 8, 2 p.m., St. Joseph Shrine, Project 2-3, Quezon City; Jan. 9, 2 p.m., SM Megamall; Jan. 10, 9 a.m., Our Lady of the Abandoned, Sta. Elena, Marikina City; Jan. 13, 8 a.m., Polo Club, Makati; Jan. 21, 4 p.m., Saints Peter & John Parish, 34 Malabon Rd. Potrero;

Jan. 22, 9 a.m., Antipolo Cathedral; Jan. 23, 9 a.m., St. Jude Parish, Manila; Jan. 24, 9 a.m., National Shrine of the Miraculous

Medal, Parañaque City; Jan. 25, 9 a.m., National Shrine of the Divine Mercy, Marilao, Bulacan; Jan. 26, 1 p.m., Holy Trinity Parish, New Cabalan, Olongapo City;

Jan. 28, 2 p.m., Lakeshore Nlex, Mexico, Pampanga; Jan. 29, 9 a.m., Immaculate Conception Parish, Guagua, Pampanga; Jan. 30, 2 p.m., Sta. Rita Parish, Sta. Rita, Bulacan; Jan. 31, 9 p.m., Divine Mercy Shrine, Mandaluyong City.

For inquiries, e-mail Bernardo V. Lopez at eastwind@motherignaciahealingministry.com.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, December 23, 2007
4th Sunday of Advent

1st Reading: Isaiah 7:10-14
Behold, the virgin shall conceive.

Once again Yahweh addressed Ahaz, "Ask for a sign from Yahweh your God, let it come either from the deepest depths or from the heights of heaven."

But Ahaz answered, "I will not ask, I will not put Yahweh to the test."

Then Isaiah said, "Now listen, descendants of David. Have you not been satisfied trying the patience of people, that you also try the patience of my God? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign:

"The Virgin is with child and bears a son and calls his name Immanuel."

2nd Reading: Romans 1:1-7
Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

From Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, an apostle called and set apart for God's Good News, the very promises he foretold through his prophets in the sacred Scriptures, regarding his Son, who was born in the flesh a descendant of David, and has been recognized as the Son of God endowed with Power, upon rising from the dead through the Holy Spirit.

Through him, Jesus Christ, our Lord, and for the sake of his Name, we received grace and mission in all the nations, for them to accept the faith.

All of you, the elected of Christ, are part of them, you, the beloved of God in Rome, called to be holy: May God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, give you grace and peace.

Gospel: Matthew 1:18-24
Emmanuel, God-with-us.

This is how Jesus Christ was born. Mary his mother had been given to Joseph in marriage but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.

Then Joseph, her husband, made plans to divorce her in all secrecy. He was an upright man, and in no way did he want to discredit her.

While he was pondering over this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, descendant of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. She has conceived by the Holy Spirit, and now she will bear a son. You shall call him 'Jesus' for he will save his people from their sins."

All this happened in order to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: The virgin will conceive and bear a son, and he will be called Emmanuel which means: God-with-us. When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do and he took his wife to his home. So she gave birth to a son and he had not had marital relations with her. Joseph gave him the name of Jesus.

Commentary

The sign of God will be given whether it is wanted or not. The child will be born and his name will be Emmanuel—God with us. God's will will be done on earth. The time approaches for it to happen again in us, as it did with Ahaz, as it did with Mary. We can choose to resist like Ahaz or to accept with Mary. We are told, "Listen! This is what was promised from old and what the Scriptures record—that the child is born of God and is the Son of God, who will live, die and be raised from the dead and is the holiness of God still among us." God came that we might learn obedience to the Word of God made flesh and belong—all of us—to God in Jesus Christ. We are greeted as the beloved of God, as was Mary and Joseph, John and Elizabeth, and Jesus, The Beloved Son of God made flesh.

We hear the story of Joseph the dreamer, the just man. We see his belief and obedience. He is a Jew, who eats/sleeps and loves the Scriptures. So when the angel quotes scripture he arises and takes Mary and the child to be born into his heart and his house, obedient to the Word of God proclaimed to him. He breaks the earlier law that would have Mary and the child stoned to death, or humiliated, shamed, and sent away for her to bear her child alone. God is coming. And God is careful of the least of his people, his own Son being born among them, and will die terribly among them. The time is close. Are we ready for the Word of God to be born in us?

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28-HOUR WATER CUTOFF IN MANILA AND QUEZON CITY

SOME portions of Manila and Quezon City will have no water for 28 hours starting at 10 p.m., Thursday, December 27, 2007 until 2:00 a.m., Saturday, December 29, 2007.

The water service interruption is due to the repair of the 1050-mm CIP mainline along R. Magsaysay near V.G. Cruz, Manila, that was accidentally damaged by the MMDA.

It will also give way for the removal of the bulkhead from the 2,000-mm LMAQ line along Sobriedad corner Batanes Streets in Manila. Removal of the bulkhead will allow for the flushing and eventual energization of the newly interconnected LMAQ primary line—a major pipeline that will serve as the main conduit that will bring water from Maynilad's La Mesa Treatment Plants all the way to the southern parts of the West Concession.

Its commissioning will improve water supply, pressure and delivery throughout the West Zone, especially in underserved areas in the south. The areas that will have no water for 28 hours are the following: In Manila: Whole Sta. Mesa including Bacood area; portion of Sampaloc bounded by Sobriedad, Nagtahan and Ramon Magsaysay; a portion of San Miguel area including Malacañang; whole of Pandacan; and a portion of Paco.

In Quezon City: Brgy. Don Manuel, Brgy. Doña Aurora, Brgy. San Isidro, Brgy. Santol and Brgy. Doña Imelda.

To alleviate the water situation of affected residents, Maynilad will be deploying a total of 27 mobile water tankers. Affected customers are nonetheless advised to store water good for the duration of the water service interruption.

The LMAQ Project is in line with the objective of Maynilad's new owners, DMCI and Metro Pacific, to upgrade the water system and bring more water to these areas in the south. We would like to apologize for any inconvenience the water service interruption may cause.

For more information, customers may call Maynilad Water Hotlines 1626 or 4362000, or text Maynilad 2898 for the water-rationing schedule.

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PAZ ABAD-SANTOS: Visual artist-inventor and therapist of the Tilamsik ng Sining.

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Artist invents gift of colors ...

From page A1

tion, which she dubbed "Fabric of Life... Series to Infinity," lets them detect colors and compose their own "painting."

Her strand system utilizes eight shades—red, orange, blue, yellow, green, violet, brown and black—distinguished by a certain number of strands affixed either close together or far apart on the cardboard tiles.

Abad-Santos said that the colors gold and silver and other features impressed on the tiles, such as glitters, sequins, beads and charms, would soon be introduced in the system for therapy purposes.

The 64-year-old artist has been toiling on her "invention" in secret for the past four years in her spacious home in Quezon City, which she converted into a gallery and a venue for all sorts of art therapy programs for the old, sick and special people.

New art form

Abad-Santos worked morning until midnight, creating thousands of miniature versions of her fabric designs and tapestries, which now make up the medium for this art form for the blind.

"It is another kind of art [for the blind], where they create their own composition without the need for paint, paper, brush or any other medium. The [tiles] that I have made is the medium already," she explained.

Only those closest to her, including her late mother, knew what she was up to, she recounted.

By 2006, upon realizing that the strand system was something that could possibly be a first, not only in the Philippines, but in the world, Abad-Santos applied for a patent at the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) of the Philippines.

(Based on her research, existing US patents allow the blind to recognize colors and identify pictures, but they do not actually let them make their own composition.)

Therapy

Early this month, Abad-San-

tos received a letter from the IPO informing her that her application has been published in its gazette.

This was the "good news" that prompted her to finally go public about her innovation and bring back the gift of color to the people who have been living in darkness—a fitting present this Christmas, she said.

"I've been doing art therapy for decades for people from all walks of life—for the cancer patients, the geriatrics, the special children. But I've never done something [big] for the blind until this strand system," she said.

She quickly added that while waiting for the patent, she would roll out a support group for the blind called Amor, for A Medium of Refuge, where the strand system will be mainly employed for art work.

Pilares, a fresh graduate and currently a home-based Web content writer, would help her manage the group, Abad-Santos said. She has been working with Pilares since August, when they first tested the strand system as required by the IPO.

Tests

"It took me a long time to do [the testing] because the psychologists, the psychiatrists and even the special education practitioners have no benchmark for such tests," Abad-Santos explained.

By serendipity, she came across Pilares during one of her regular weekend trips to a flea market near the National Kidney and Transplant Institute in April. Pilares was then helping her mother sell embroidered clothes.

"I've been going to this TIANGGE for three to four years now. When I met her last April, I told her about my project and she agreed to do the test for me," Abad-Santos recounted.

But because "so many things have occurred" in her life, she said, without divulging more details, they were only able to get together for the test four months after

their first encounter.

Cakewalk

For Pilares, the test was a cakewalk. In just a few minutes, she managed to master the strands and their corresponding colors, at first with the aid of the Braille system for interpretation, the girl recalled.

In two hours, she was already accurately describing patterns and identifying colors from the designs which Abad-Santos had prepared for the test.

Four months later, Pilares was confidently making her own designs, picking out with ease cardboard tiles from an array of plastic containers arranged within her reach.

When at work, she would turn quiet to contemplate on the colors appropriate for her composition or to just remember the images that she once drew as a child with a normal eyesight.

"When I was a kid, I would draw houses, mountains or a circle to symbolize the earth. That's what I'm trying to replicate when I do this," she said.

Fitting gift

Now, Pilares has a total of eight compositions displayed in Abad-Santos' gallery.

"I'm happy that I am able to do art work now. I'm sure that the other visually impaired will be happy because they will also get to enjoy the beauty of colors," she said excitedly.

But she has another vision for the strand system. "This will really be useful if this will be introduced in malls because it's hard for the blind to pick out the colors of clothes and other little stuffs we want to buy," she said.

Abad-Santos agreed, saying that if the IPO had finally granted her a patent for the strand system, she would allow department stores to use her devise.

"It is a fitting gift for all the Filipino people and the rest of the world. It will have to be indicated that it is made in the Philippines for all to know that our country has something to share for everyone else," she said.

Inquirer keeps No. 1 spot in readership

From page A1

six years ago.

Romualdez added: "We would like to thank our readers, advertisers, dealers and partners for their continued faith. It inspires us even more to do our best to meet our readers' needs."

"For our advertisers, this means we are the only broadsheet that can give them the widest reach. We will continue to provide them with excellent opportunities to reach their customers."

Service to readers

She pledged that the INQUIRER would continue to "work closely with our dealers and newsboys and other partners to ensure that service to our readers and advertisers continually improves."

The latest Nielsen survey also showed that the INQUIRER was No. 1 across all areas and among readers belonging to the ABC1 socioeconomic class (52 percent). ABC1 includes households with a monthly household income of over P30,000.

Among the broadsheets, INQUIRER had the highest "yesterday readership" in the Visayas (74 percent), Mindanao (70 percent) and Balance of Luzon (65 percent) and Mega Manila (48 percent).

Mega Manila includes Metro Manila, Bulacan, Pampanga, Cavite, Laguna and Rizal. Balance of Luzon covers 11 cities in Luzon outside Metro Manila.

Similar results

The findings were similar to results of an earlier survey released by Nielsen in the first half, which also showed the INQUIRER on top with 54 percent, or an estimated 1.47 million readers.

The earlier survey showed that Manila Bulletin came in second (47 percent) and Philippine Star, third (42 percent).

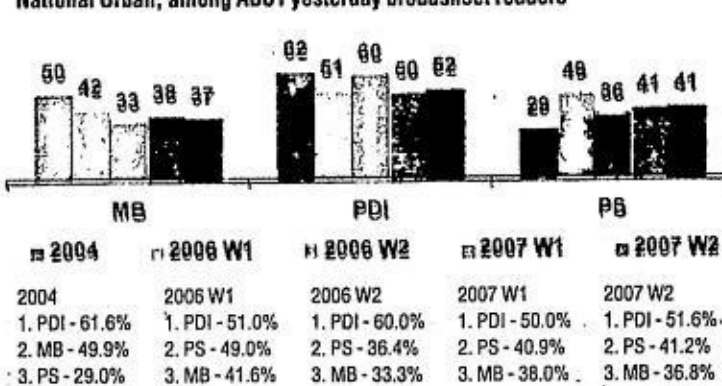
SIM is frontrunner

The latest Nielsen study also showed that the INQUIRER's weekend supplement, the Sunday Inquirer Magazine, maintained its leadership within its category, with 39 percent readership among those who said they had read a magazine in the previous week.

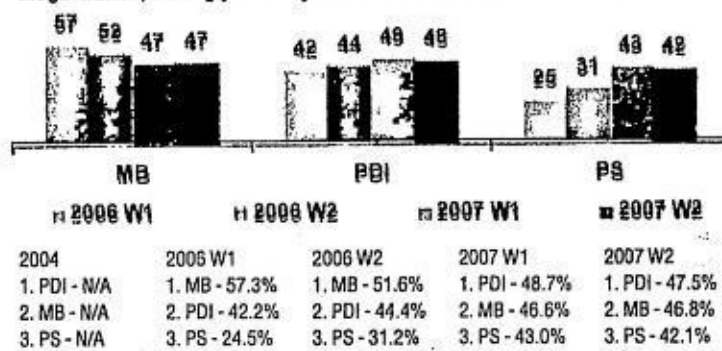
Panorama came in second with 35 percent, while Starweek was third with 12 percent.

TOP 3 BROADSHEETS READ YESTERDAY

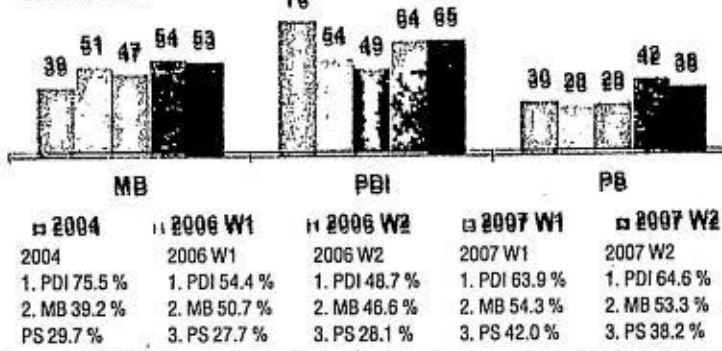
National Urban, among ABC1 yesterday broadsheet readers



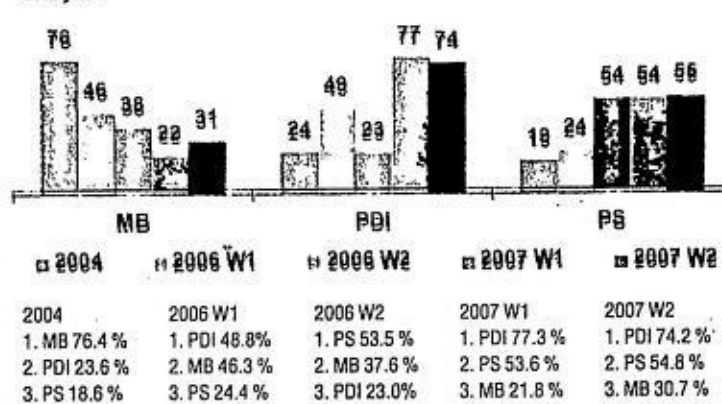
Mega Manila, among yesterday broadsheet readers



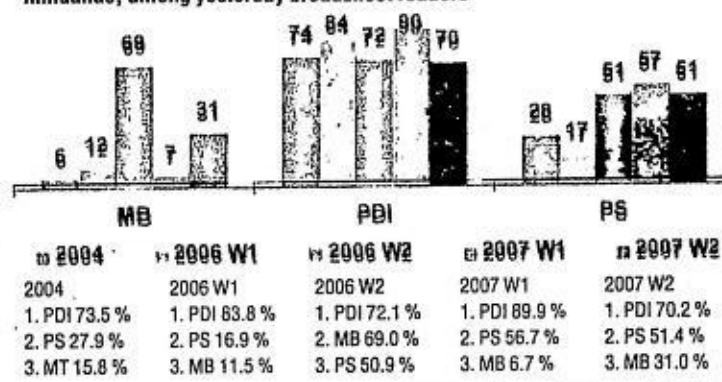
Balance Luzon



Visayas



Mindanao, among yesterday broadsheet readers



* ENHANCED, CONSISTS OF COMBINED WAVE 1 & 2 SAMPLE
SOURCE: NIELSEN MEDIA RESEARCH, MEDIA INDEX 2007W2

The syndicated survey used face-to-face interviews using a structured questionnaire with a multistage probability sample of 5,100 respondents aged 10 and above.

Waves 1 and 2

The Media Index covered all socioeconomic classes in national urban Philippines, which includes Metro Manila and 21 other key cities across the country.

The survey had a margin of error of plus-or-minus one percentage point.

The results included data from Nielsen's Media Index Wave 1, which was conducted

in the first quarter of the year, and Wave 2, which was conducted over August and September.

Nielsen said it combined respondents from both waves "for a bigger sample size and better analysis of niche targets."

Nielsen Media Research is one of the leading providers of television audience measurement and advertising information services worldwide. It used to release the Media Index annually. It started conducting the readership survey twice a year in 2006.

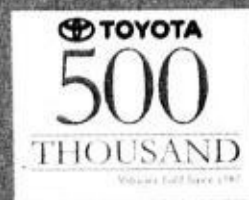
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Lawmakers join fight against cigarette smoking

By Christian V. Esguerra

LEGISLATORS ARE JOINING the fight against cigarette smoking, with six lawmakers leading a bipartisan effort at the House of Representatives to pass legislation designed to scare smokers into quitting.

The group, led by Northern Samar Rep. Paul Daza, is pushing a bill that would require tobacco companies to place "picture warnings" on their products to illustrate the dangers of cigarette smoking.

The warnings will include im-

ages of tumors, diseased lungs and other ill effects of the vice on smokers as well as the victims of second-hand smoke.

This move by the legislators is in line with the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, a May 2003 treaty that includes strategies against the problem of tobacco smoking. The treaty has been ratified by 154 countries, including the Philippines.

In accordance with the treaty provisions, the Philippines has to implement the "picture warning" policy by September 2008, according to Dr. Maricar Limpin,

president of the FCTC Alliance Philippines.

"This is a treaty obligation," party-list Rep. Risa Hontiveros, a deputy minority leader and co-sponsor of the bill, said at a press conference.

The measure is being supported by South Cotabato Rep. Arthur Pingoy Jr., chair of the committee on health, Pampanga Rep. Anna York Bondoc, a pulmonary and critical care specialist, Quezon Rep. Lorenzo Tanada III, and Cibac Rep. Jose Villanueva.

The bill will require that every cigarette pack carries "a photo-

graphic picture warning and an accompanying textual warning." The full-color image must occupy at least 60 percent of the space.

Violators—manufacturers, importers, exporters, and distributors, including their agents—will be fined a maximum of P500,000 on the first offense and not more than P5 million on the second offense.

A third violation will slap a P20-million fine and/or imprisonment of six months to one year.

If the bill is passed, the Philippines will join 14 other countries,

which have been implementing the "picture warning" policy. Among them are Thailand, Canada, Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, Brazil and Venezuela.

Limpin said five more countries have legislated the same policy and would be implementing it soon.

At present, the country's Tobacco Regulation Act prescribes only "text" health warnings on cigarette packs. The strategy is apparently not enough to educate people on smoking.

More than 90 percent of Filipinos knew "little beyond a

vague notion that 'smoking is bad for you,'" according to a fact sheet distributed by Limpin's group to reporters yesterday.

The document said the Philippines has around 30 million regular smokers, of which 60 percent are adult male smokers.

"While the typical Filipino smoker knows that smoking is dangerous to his health, he tends to underestimate the risks because he does not have the benefit of seeing a gangrene-afflicted foot or a person with mouth and throat cancer on cigarette pack-



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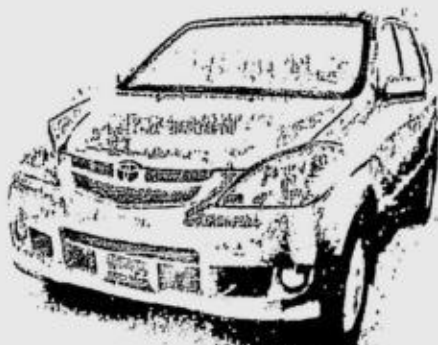


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Selective reasoning

THE HOLIDAY PARDONS GRANTED BY PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo further underscore the selective reasoning behind them. The pardoned prisoners included a lady in her 70s and a couple of octogenarians and even someone in his 90s. The Palace insists that a cohesive policy is in place, and that there is even an Administrative Order instituting it. We don't doubt that there is such a document, but as with all official papers, the problem lies in its implementation.

EDITORIALS

The Palace, when it says the policy isn't new, only proves that the process, when applied to lowly prisoners who have no pull, is slow. Otherwise the aged prisoners might have been released sooner. Having neither political clout nor access to anything beyond the process, this means that while eventually they obtained presidential clemency, no one went out of their way to expedite their release.

Contrast their experiences with the swiftness with which the pardon of Joseph Estrada was accomplished, complete with a helicopter ferrying the papers back and forth to Tanay, and the near-release of Romeo Jalosjos, which had officials leaking the possibility of a pardon in an effort to massage public opinion. All the resources—political and administrative—of the state were mobilized to gain the two prisoners access to presidential clemency. They were first in line, and first to look forward to the prospects of a lenient chief executive.

Which tells us the problem with the President's policy. It is a crude one. It does not distinguish between types of crime, or even, when the crimes for which convicts are asking for pardon took place. A prisoner who committed a crime at age 69, for example, should not enjoy the prospects of immediate pardon upon reaching the age of 70, when a prisoner who committed a lesser crime might have to wait decades to receive clemency.

As we've said before, compassion is all very well, but a serious effort at rehabilitation is even better. As would be a policy of fostering rehabilitation with mobilizing the justice system to enable the poor to have as much access to the means to appeal to the chief executive, as a prominent prisoner. Not least because our jails are full of prisoners whose crimes were compounded by their being unable to afford competent representation, and whose sentences were arrived at after consulting the statute books but without adequately taking into consideration the circumstances under which those crimes were committed—or without the system being geared toward identifying who the hardened criminals are, and who might benefit from the correctional and not simply the punitive aspect of our penal system.

Unbusinesslike brawl

SETTING ASIDE THE MERITS OR DEMERITS OF the two sides contesting control of Philcomsat, the recent Mexican standoff in the premises of the company's office was deplorable. For company officials to barricade themselves in an office, to deny access to that office to a rival board, or for a new board to force their way into an office to gain possession of it, is not the way business ought to be conducted.

This is not the kind of behavior that should be seen in boardrooms and it is not the sort of thing that should be tolerated. It betrays the feudal mind-set of the groups involved, sending mercenaries—whether security guards or lawyers—to do their masters' bidding.

It only goes to show how deeply entrenched the essentially lawless mentality of our so-called movers and shakers can be. The dispute over management of the company is before the courts, the confrontations should have been kept in the legal arena. The confrontation that took place sends a very bad signal, to Filipinos and foreign investors alike, concerning the attitudes toward law, order and business in general, held by people with connections to official circles.

Not least because official agencies like the Presidential Commission on Good Government are involved, and the company itself represents a legacy of the kleptocratic Marcos dictatorship and their booty, which successor governments have continued to mismanage and use as patronage.



A specially remembered Christmas

ONE CHRISTMAS I SPECIALLY REMEMBER happened in 1941 when war came to the Philippines on Dec. 8. I was 17 years old then, and all I knew about war was what I had seen in the movies.

When we heard of the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, my mother was gripped with fear. I could see it in her distraught but still beautiful face. I suppose she was thinking of the Japanese atrocities in Nanking that had shocked the whole world. Her fright was not about the mighty conflict between the United States and Japan but what would happen to her family if the invaders came.

We lived then in the district of Sampaloc, Manila, with our father and mother, both only 43 years old, although we considered them already ancient at the time. That was because we, their children, were still young, our eldest brother Virgilio being still a teenager at 19 and our *bunso* Vicente Jr. not yet 7.

My mother was so distressed that morning that, not knowing what else to do, she gave each of us 50 centavos (a fortune then) for our subsistence in case we got lost or separated. That same morning, as she fretted in the house and prayed to the Virgin Mary, we spent all our money on dirty ice cream. When our father learned about our prodigality, he teased our not-amused mother about it.

As the nation girded for war, President Manuel L. Quezon pledged our loyalty to the United States and Gen. Douglas MacArthur promised to defend us with all the military might of his country. The new patriotic slogan bravely urged: "Keep 'em flying!"—meaning the Philippine and American flags together.

Despite this tone of courage and defiance, many people panicked and decided to leave Manila for the safety of the provinces. Everyone in our family sought refuge in Laguna, except my 75-year-old Lolo Teong and me, for different reasons. My grandfather had fought the Spaniards and the Americans and said he was not afraid to face the Japanese. I stayed

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz



because I was commanded to report for military duty as an ROTC cadet in the University of the Philippines.

My fellow cadets and I obeyed the summons, bringing with us our own bedding, mats, blankets and pillows, as ordered, with our personal effects. It was comforting, and also fun, to see familiar classmates, all of us secretly scared that we might soon be fighting for our lives in the trenches. We were organized into companies and our battalion was assigned to stay in the Engineering Building, which would be our temporary barracks.

Life there was peaceful even without the comforts of home. We woke up at 6 or earlier every morning for our daily ablutions, then lined up for breakfast before the military drills that continued until lunchtime, when we were regularly threatened by the drone of Japanese planes flying harmlessly overhead. Afternoons were generally free, usually for writing love letters and receiving visitors, like my parents who regularly brought me canned goods to make me win the war. After supper, we were ready for sleep, but first there was general singing of Christmas carols with scratchy but appreciated violin accompaniment. This continued even after taps, and the camp commander paternally allowed our joyful insomnia.

There was that time he pinpointed 20 of us, myself included, and boarded us into a weapons carrier for an unknown destination as our friends mournfully said goodbye.

This was it, I thought, and prepared to die for my country. Happily, as it turned out, we were simply taken to the UST and ordered to

load some filing cabinets into trucks for transfer elsewhere. Afterwards, we were returned to our UP camp and were received by our fellow warriors like conquering heroes.

As Christmas approached, rumors began to fly about the approach of the Japanese forces that we would be needed to resist to the death. Some ominously whispered that we would be sent to the deadly front the day after Christmas, which was why we were to be feted with a gala Yuletide banquet as some sort of farewell and advance honor for our impending sacrifice.

And indeed the feast on Christmas Day was a sheer delight. The inviting table was overflowing with all kinds of tasty dishes and delectable fruits, with a mighty *lechon* as the *pièce de résistance* and the tragic tribute to our heroism.

But before we could savor the extravagant feast, we were told to listen to an important announcement. Our commandant took the mike for all of us to hear him. He said, sounding like an old-time prophet, that our camp had been ordered disbanded. All of us were accordingly dismissed as of that minute. We were all free to leave after we shall have partaken of the excellent lunch, so farewell and good luck to all of you. Then he saluted us and left.

It took one glorious moment before we could react. We were stunned beyond belief! This was really a very Merry Christmas! With whoops of joy and relief, we swiftly gathered our things, leaving the suddenly lonely *lechon* uneaten and happily ignored. We were going home!

We grabbed all available transportation—taxicabs, buses, streetcars—and some even just ran faster than the wind. I hitched a ride and somehow reached our house just before the family sat down for the Christmas lunch—with me included! Thank you, Holy Infant, on your blessed day! It was the most delicious lunch I ever ate and the happiest Christmas I can remember.

'Excuse me'

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD



DID YOU HEAR THE STORY ABOUT A MAN who was always making excuses? Asked why he did not show up for his appointment, his lame excuse was: "Well, I was in the escalator, and there was a brownout, and I was stuck up there for an hour!"

In today's Gospel (Mt. 1, 18-24), Joseph had all the excuses for not taking Mary to be his wife. In fact, he had decided to divorce her quietly, but in the end, he obeyed, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him.

There are many times when we are asked by the Lord to do a mission for Him. At such times, our response to Him could either be: "Include me" or "excuse me."

"Pasko? Pass ako! (Christmas? Count me out!)" Maybe that's what you are saying now, and you probably said that also last year. Until when will you keep postponing your acceptance of God's gift of Himself? Until when will you reject His love? So when will you really go back to the Father? Maybe next year? Maybe never.

The thing is that you and I cannot deny the fact that we are not getting any younger. Sooner or later, we will face our Creator. I hope you and I will not be bypassed when the time comes for our final confirmation for eternal life.

That times are hard is hardly an excuse for missing out on the spirit of Christmas. When we focus on the trimmings and not on the essence of Christmas, we may feel that we are exempted from the spirit of giving. Remember, the first Christmas happened in very poor and insecure conditions. And yet, there was a lot of giving, and a lot of giving in. So instead of giving up on Christmas, let's all give Christmas a chance.

Christmas is as real as you make it. In other

words, Christmas is not some event that happened some 2007 years ago. It is not some sentimental, nostalgic, cozy celebration we fall into once a year. We have to make Christmas happen again and again by our loving and giving, every single day of the year, and especially at this time of the year.

Lately I have been asked to intercede and make reconciliation possible between people, all in the spirit of Christmas. It is not a very comfortable role, I must admit, to be caught up in the middle of conflicts, but being a peacemaker is part and parcel of my priesthood. You know, what really helps? Prayer! I just tell the Lord in all humility to take over, and it's amazing how things just fall into place.

Is there any conflict in your relationships? Just ask the Lord's help especially at Christmas, and He will help you. Reach out to God in prayer, reach out to others in humility, and peace is yours.

I am edified to hear that many companies and many government agencies have decided to forego their Christmas parties, and have donated their party money instead to their favorite charities. I am saddened though to hear of government leaders and government officials who, instead of sharing their overflowing material blessings, have taken the opportunity to use Christmas as an excuse to appropriate for themselves our poor people's money.

In our community Christmas gathering,

I was amazed by our 84-year-old confrere Fr. Julio Barbieto, SVD who rendered to us two Ilocano songs with his guitar, and how! What makes it very significant is that "Fr. JB" learned to play the guitar only last March in our retirement house. Some two years ago, he learned to use the cell phone and the computer. When I asked him what he wanted for Christmas, guess what he said? He wants a violin, used or new, so that he can start a new hobby by next year. Maybe that's what Advent is all about: a constant forward looking. Maybe that's what Christmas is all about: a constant hope, fresh start and new beginning.

At Christmas, particularly on Christmas Day, let us humbly thank God for our blessings. Let us also take time to show our love and appreciation for people who are a blessing (even those who are a cross) to us. Let us also reach out to people who are less fortunate than us.

I am one with you in gratitude, in love and in prayer especially at Christmas.

Where will you and I be next Christmas? We don't know. What we know is that we are still here this Christmas. Remember: Wherever you are, you are there, and God is there! Emmanuel—God is with us! Let us make His presence felt and make His love a reality every day, especially at Christmas.

Wishing you all a meaningful and blessed Christmas!

I am praying for peace in our hearts, peace in our homes, peace in our country, peace in the world, especially at Christmas!

A moment with the Lord:
 Lord, instead of saying "Excuse me," help me to say "Include me," not only on Christmas but every single day of my life. Amen.

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WITH DUE RESPECT

Artemio V. Panganiban



A DISTANT COUSIN OF MINE, "KADYO" (NICKNAME for Arcadio), was a taxi driver in Metro Manila. He zigzagged in and out of lanes, passed red lights, choked already clogged intersections ignoring the crossing vehicles, and drove in the opposite lane blocking the in-coming traffic. But wonder of wonders, he has not been fined or haled to court for any traffic violation.

Miracle of the three "Es." When I asked him how he has escaped sanctions for his traffic violations, he bragged: "It's simple. Usually, there are no policemen. During the few times that there were, I would argue I passed only a yellow, not red, light. If the policeman ignores my 'lusot' (bluster), I threaten him with a suit and boast that I had a good lawyer. No, not you Coya. My lawyer is Manuel A. Roxas (sheepishly pulling out a hundred-peso bill in which the photo of President Roxas is imprinted). If 'lagay' (bribery) does not work, I use 'lakas' (influence) by crowing that the mayor is my cousin. Yes, 'lusot, lagay, lakas,' these three 'Es' have enabled me to feed my nine children, the eldest of whom has just passed the nursing board exam."

Kadyo in America. That was 15 years ago. Last August, my wife and I visited my sick brother in Vancouver. Thereafter, we flew to Las Vegas en route to see our children in the United States. There, we watched some shows (Celine Dion, The Producers, Mystere and Lani Misalucha). Driving the cab we hailed on "the Strip" one evening was Kadyo!

I was, of course, surprised to meet him there, and even more startled to see him driving so carefully and observing all traffic rules. He explained that his eldest child, who was employed 14 years ago in a nearby hospital, was allowed to bring in her parents. "I do not use the three 'Es' here because I would get into trouble with the police and lose my license. I just follow all rules. I earn enough without having to use bluster, bribe or influence. In America, one only needs to be industrious to live comfortably," he mused.

Kadyo is typical of many Filipinos who violate

traffic rules here, cheat in paying their taxes, employ legal short cuts, and patronize politicians to be able to land a job or to secure a government contract. But once they are in America, or in other developed countries, they obey all laws, dutifully fall in line and enjoy the blessings of life by just doing their work diligently. To forge ahead, they do not need to peddle influence or polish their bosses.

World Bank Report. For the longest time, I had been wondering, why does the Filipino worker mightily succeed when he is in the United States, but not when he is back home? Another heart warming fact: according to our consul general in New York, Cecilia Rebong, the Filipino professionals in the United States earn comparatively more than their counterpart native Americans. Why? The answer may lie in a World Bank (WB) report on the "Wealth of Nations."

The study shows that if the total wealth or "capital" of the United States were distributed evenly, each person there (including Kadyo) would have access to \$512,612 in capital, compared to only \$19,351 in the Philippines. That is why industrious and law-abiding Kadyo earns more there than here; and more than other drivers there.

To be sure, the WB explains that there are really three kinds of wealth: (1) natural capital—"the sum of nonrenewable resources (including oil, natural gas, coal and mineral resources), cropland, pastureland, forested areas and protected areas"; (2) produced capital—"the sum of machinery, equipment, and structures (including infrastructure)"; and, (3) intangible capital that encompasses raw labor, human capital (the sum of

knowledge, skills and know-how of the population), social capital (the level of trust among people in a society and their ability to work together toward common goals) and the quality of institutions essential to good governance, like an independent judiciary, clear property rights, effective revenue collection, nonpolitical military, credible elections and stable rule of law.

Worldwide, natural capital accounts for only 5 percent of total wealth, produced capital for 18 percent, and intangible capital for 77 percent. On the average, every one in the world has a total wealth of \$90,000, an amount available to those in Brazil (\$87,000), Libya (\$89,000) and Croatia (\$91,000). This world average is much more than the Philippines' \$19,351, broken down into \$1,549 natural, \$2,673 produced and \$15,129 intangible.

While natural resources help, they are not the most important wealth. Singapore has zero natural capital but is credited with \$79,011 produced capital plus \$173,595 intangible capital for a total of \$252,607. Japan has only \$1,513 natural (same as ours) but has \$150,258 produced plus \$341,470 intangible for a total of \$493,241.

Conclusion: The WB study shows that more than three-fourths of the total wealth of the world is intangible. Further, the most significant elements of intangible wealth are education and the rule of law. These two facts imply that while the natural resources and infrastructure priorities of President Macapagal-Arroyo deserve some attention, the much more important focus should be on our intangible capital, like the primacy of education, the promotion of the rule of law, and the strengthening of our democratic institutions. These are the truly lasting legacies.

To those who asked for more NUSP info, log in to cjanganiban.ph and click "Recent Speeches" for a complete text of my NUSP address.

Comments are welcome at chiefjusticepanganiban@hotmail.com

Coming home

AT LARGE



Rina Jimenez-David

"loyal," "generous" and "kaladkarin (easy to take along)."

Finding "Gene" too simple a name, co-staffers at Index gave her a longer nickname, "Genoveva," and when she exhibited cluelessness and naiveté, "Geneboba," which she accepted with gracious humor. A particular sticking point was Gene's loyalty to the tandem of Pops Fernandez and Martin Nievera, dragging her friends along to every concert and show. Lorna David, a co-staffer at Index, recalls cringing in shame at a concert because Gene would shout out her love for Martin and Pops at intervals.

No one could recall Gene ever scowling or treating anyone with less than kindness. Lala de Leon Ligon, a good friend of Gene's, says that Gene did go through the usual ups-and-downs, as well as complications in her love life, but even if their sessions began with tears, "each one would always end with us crying—in laughter."

After some years with Index, weathering one financial crisis after another, Gene joined Foundation for Development Alternatives, working with urban poor communities. But there was a restless side to Gene and after more than a decade in development work, she decided to expand her frontiers and applied with the United Nations.

FRIENDS were at first dismayed when Gene was assigned by WFP to Afghanistan, where she stayed for five years. At one point, Gene was caught inside a building in Herat when an angry mob besieged the UN compound. She managed to escape by fleeing with a local staffer to a nearby house, then fled the city by donning a burqa and pretending to be the man's wife, speeding through the streets on a

motorcycle. Asked what it felt like wearing this restrictive clothing, Gene told an interviewer that "it saved my life," and burqas have since been issued as standard "equipment" in UN employees' emergency kits in Afghanistan.

Though she found her work fulfilling, Gene nevertheless felt restricted in Afghanistan, being able to leave the security compound where she lived and worked only once every six weeks. But she made good use of her temporary liberty, bringing home to friends and family nuts, dates and "pashmina shawls of every color and design."

Orette Felipe says that work in the UN changed Gene, from someone who yearned to live "a comfortable and safe life" to "a more assertive, adventurous person."

"I am so happy that her years abroad helped Gene bloom as a person and as a woman," said Orette. "Working with the UN, she found herself."

WHEN the offer to transfer to Algeria came, friends said Gene was sorely tempted. A month's assignment in Algiers gave her a taste of life there, and she reported back to friends that she found the place "nice" and "safe" and she was looking forward to enjoying greater freedom of movement.

But before the transfer, she had anticipated spending Christmas at home, even promising Beth Yang, another Index colleague, that she would help organize a reunion of the Index family. When her home leave did not push through, she discussed plans of spending Christmas in Rome instead. Orette, who was chatting with Gene online on Dec. 11, the day of the bombing, recalls Gene excitedly sharing news of finally finding a new home, since she had been staying in a hotel since her arrival in Algiers. "And then suddenly, I got the message that Gene was off-line, which I found strange because I knew she would stay online the whole time she was in the office."

Gene would never spend Christmas at home again, but because of her, the long-delayed reunion of ex-Indexers did take place, at her wake, before her family brought her home.

Cry, beloved Burma

WORLD VIEW

U Gambira and Ashin Nayaka

Intellectuals and ordinary people joined us in the streets, in the rain.

We thought that we could appeal to some, if not all, of the generals—Buddhists themselves—who control our country to join us in trying to right the many ills befalling Burma. At first, we tried to show our displeasure with military rule by refusing to receive alms from them. We turned our begging bowls upside down as a gesture of our feelings. We have not lost our loving kindness toward ordinary soldiers, nor even toward the leaders who ordered them to brutalize their own people, but we wanted to urge them to change while there was still time.

We know that some people in the army and organizations close to the regime have been reluctant to use violence against the monks. We want to tell the people who are violent toward their own countrymen to stop and think whether their actions are in accordance with the dharma, whether they are acting for the good of Burma's people. Some of the soldiers who were ordered to beat us and to stop us from marching actually refused to do so, because they understood the truth of what we were doing.

We hoped to create a way out for the military leaders, a way to start a real dialogue with the people's leaders and the leaders of ethnic groups, for the unity of the nation. But that hope was short-lived. The regime is now hunting down those who participated in the demonstrations and committing unspeakable acts of violence.

They have attacked monasteries and arrested monks and nuns by force. Guards are every-

where, on all the streets, around the pagodas and residential areas. Wounded demonstrators are reported to have been buried alive in mass graves, and there are confirmed reports of bodies washing ashore in the waterways near Rangoon. The regime is brutalizing the Burmese people, and lying to the world about its actions.

Brig. Gen. Kyaw Hsan, a representative of the military, told UN Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari that the marchers in the streets were "bogus monks." But we are genuine, and thousands of us—from Rangoon, Mandalay, Pegu, Arakan, Magwe and Sagaing—demonstrated for peace.

Some have said that the uprising in Burma is over. That is what the junta wants the world to think. But we believe that the protests represent the beginning of the end of military rule in our country. The generals who ordered the crackdown are assaulting not only Burma's people, but also their own hearts, souls and spiritual beliefs. The monks are the preservers of dharma; by attacking them, the generals attack Buddhism itself.

We know that the international community is trying to help us, but we need that help to be more effective. We thank the many people and organizations abroad who are helping us regain the rights denied to us for more than 40 years. But we also appeal to the international community to make its actions practical and effective.

The military government will do anything to remain in power, and their violent acts must be exposed to the world. They may control the streets and monasteries, but they will never be able to control our hearts and our determination.

Project Syndicate

U Gambira is the pseudonym of one of the leaders of the All Burma Sangha Coalition. Ashin Nayaka is founder of the Buddhist Missionary Society and a visiting scholar at Columbia University.

To my monster

THE MONSTER WILL NOT BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS this year.

Ever since I was old enough to talk, I've pounded on his bedroom door on Christmas morning, poking my fingers into his ears, tugging at his feet, trying to drag his snoring carcass out of bed. The Monster would growl, flail, burrow into pillows and finally mutter assent, and after several sessions of T-shirt dragging and hair-pulling, he would get on his feet, and trudge down to the living room couch, a pillow following in his wake. Then he would promptly fall asleep. It was

REBEL WITHOUT A CLUE

Patricia Evangelista



enough for me. My parents never let us open Christmas presents without the whole family downstairs and around the tree. To ask for all of us to be awake was a condition they never imposed—there would have been a greater probability of a decomposing James Dean coming to life than my drooling older brother doing the same thing.

I don't remember when I started calling him "Monster." It could have been when I was 8, and he was 15 and giving flowers to girls. I'd tape his ears to his head (for his own good, I'd say) so they wouldn't stick out and flap around. It could have been during dinner, when my mother would admonish him to take smaller bites, and he would respond by displaying the half-masticated contents of his mouth. Or it may have been when he squashed his grinning face against the car window, his nostrils the size of the Katipunan underpass. Whatever the reason, he became The Monster, and The Monster he would stay, especially when he would camp out in the living room, glaring at whichever unfortunate male friend had come home with me to dinner.

This is the first Christmas he won't be home, the first one he'll be away when my mother decorates the house in red and green, hanging stockings on bedroom doors, changing pillowcases to red and green, digging out the cardboard Santa Claus place mats she's picked up at a bazaar more than a decade ago. I suspect that she'd have blinking, multi-colored Christmas lights on the shower curtains if Dad gave her the green light. As it is, my parents' house is now a zoo of green curtains and shiny red balls, with apple pies and stuffed chicken shooting out of the oven in record speed.

The last time I talked to him, he said he wished he could come home, but that his contract required at least a year in Dubai. It was hard to send home presents, he said, but he'd make up for it. My brother tells me he's found it impossible to open the photos I've e-mailed to him, and has warned me that dozens of sites are banned in Dubai. I'd like to send him a Christmas present, but I'm told it's ridiculously expensive to ship anything to the Emirates, and I'm so ridiculously broke even sending a Christmas card is something I can't afford. In the absence of any means of proper communication, I'll be self-indulgent today, and write my big brother a letter here, the same sort of letter thousands of families in this country are writing to sons and daughters and husbands and wives this Christmas, all those who are far away and cannot come home. Here it goes:

So, Monster Man, how are you? Are you still getting fat? Have you discovered how to cook anything that doesn't say "Just add water?"

I moved into my apartment a little more than a month ago. Your friends helped me move my—let me count—five pieces of furniture. My unit is so tiny that having more than five people inside at one time will constitute sinning. I have a beautiful couch that Mom got second-hand; it can fit three small people or one David. You remember my teammate David? He donated his electric fan to me. Nicole, the obsessive-compulsive one, got me flatware and pre-cut sticker labels. I am assuming she wants me to label my closet drawers again.

I don't have a TV yet, but I have my very own coffeemaker that makes one tiny cup of coffee at a time. Dad sits on my couch drinking coffee with his pinky sticking out because the cup is half the size of his hand. I've appropriated your bedside table and the mirror in your bathroom, half the boxer shorts in your drawer and the black metal chair from your desk. Have taken Mom's curtains, Dad's standing lamp, and two of your pillows.

The parental units are going into a house-decorating frenzy. They claim that now we're all gone (except for the two grandkids), they can do what they want with the house. Mom painted the outside walls orange—the official shade for the paint is "Tomato Soup"—and has been making sounds about painting the other walls navy blue.

Dad has been driving all of us nuts with his photographs. Every horizontal space that can possibly hold a picture frame has been jammed with pictures: Mom when she was young, me on Lolo's lap, you in your plate-size glasses, the grandkids eating chocolate cake, me during college graduation. Every day, Dad goes out to buy picture frames, and the few times I've gone with him, I spent half an hour in front of dozens of picture frames waiting for him to make his earth-shattering selections. He's been pointing them out to every unfortunate soul who goes through the door, and anyone who compliments Mom's pictures is treated to a dissertation—delivered by Mom, of course—about how she looked so much sexier in a string bikini. I am repeatedly told I don't measure up, and have no choice but to agree, as I am still lacking some of Mom's attributes.

Ysabel ate a bag of raisins and a bag of chocolate chips and had an upset stomach for days. She has acquired several new words, including "sorry." Two months ago, the parents were in my apartment, and when I was sitting on the stairs, Dad stepped on my hand. I screamed bloody murder. Dad looked guilty, and a little voice peeped out "Sorry." She has taken to apologizing at every opportunity, and I suspect she will apologize for Adam and Eve the moment she learns how to read the Bible.

Robby is now a year old, has discovered he has legs, and now wiggles his little baby butt down the stairs to his Lolo. Sometimes we forget about him, as he is perfectly content to sit on his high chair, thinking deeply. Dad and I believe he is solving great international dilemmas.

The babies are still in love with Dad, and although sometimes they desire to be in other adults' company, they howl whenever Dad sneaks out the front door to go picture-frame shopping.

It's Christmas Eve tomorrow. We all miss you, and want you home, and there's no one to yell at me for coming home drunk anymore, and no big brother who will make me wrap his Christmas presents (remember how you made me wrap your present for me?). For you I will hug Mom twice and tell Dad I love him a thousand times more. I'll toss Robby in the air and blow on Ysabel's stomach, but it won't be the same without you. Come home soon.

Your bratty kid sister, Tricia.

Merry Christmas to everyone who is away from home, and everyone left at home.

For comments e-mail rebel.inquirer@gmail.com

TALK of the TOWN

Pursuing wellness during the holidays

MARC COHEN, Ph.D., president of the Australasian Integrative Medical Association, defines wellness as a conscious state of being "well" in which one's inner and outer worlds are in harmony.

Out of the convergence of doctors, professors and health-care experts from 33 countries at the SpaAsia Wellness Summit in Manila in October emerged a definition of wellness. In the definition, science is included in the synergy of mind, body and spirit.

Spirit of the season

NOAH MCKAY, MD, American author of the book "Wellness at Warp Speed" and physician-consultant to the emerging medical spa industry, stressed the need to bring science face-to-face with the spirit, not in a confrontational way but in a compassionate manner. Compassion and care will distinguish the "wellness" industry of spas and health resorts from the "sickness" industry of hospitals and emergency clinics.

Christmas is one fine excuse for people to be merry. It could be spiritual or religious in nature or it could be a fulfillment of a need in a life of struggle and stress. It was the psy-

chologist Carl Jung who said "we need the contrast in order to experience the feeling of happiness."

For Christians, Christmas is the greatest gift bestowed by the Father on mankind: the gift of a Master to lead through the Light. Mankind can be excused if it wants it to be both a spiritual odyssey and a material enjoyment.

For the spiritual, it is a celebration of connecting with the Divine that enables one to focus on the more essential albeit invisible things about life, not excluding miracles, health and happiness.

The pursuit of happiness

as prescribed by Dr. Geraldine Mitton:

- 1. Eat well.** You are what you eat. Digest, assimilate and eliminate.
- 2. Exercise.** Walk, dance, swim, stretch, breathe. Exercise is the most powerful antidepressant and creates the happiness hormone—endorphin.
- 3. Cope with stress.** Stress is not what happens to you. It's what you do about it.
- 4. Be creative.** Your thoughts become your reality through the journey from imagination to intuition to intention.
- 5. Have a purpose and mission in life.** "...for this is a journey that men make to find themselves. If they fail in this, it doesn't matter much else what they find." — James Michener
- 6. Serve others.** Our greatest well-being is dependent on giving and sharing. Look up to the example of Mother Teresa.
- 7. Forgive.** Release toxic emotions and set yourself free through forgiveness by giving up the need to always be right.
- 8. Be grateful.** Gratitude is fertilizer for the soul.
- 9. Laugh.** Laughter is one of the few infectious things that cannot make you sick.
- 10. Attain inner peace.** Time out, rest, relax and meditate.
- 11. Cherish family and friends.** Be with good people and fellow optimists.

Food is our relationship with the environment

What we eat deeply affects the way we think, feel and behave.

Exercise. Stretch. Breathe.

Mind, body and heart work together as a fully integrated system...

We are all interconnected.



body

...to process information and formulate a response to the things happening within and around you.

Because of this, our thoughts, feelings, beliefs and attitudes can either kill you, or make you well.

— Dr. Noah McKay

In her presentation at the Wellness Summit, Mitton

In a season celebrated for the pursuit of happiness in the midst of health and environmental challenges, this new paradigm on wellness comes as a timely and urgent reminder.

It has been affirmed that wellness provides the best preventive medicine to stress and disease. Learning from it, can empower people to enjoy life and to achieve longevity.

Text and photo illustration by Lynett A. Villariba

State of mind

GERALDINE MITTON, MD, a pioneer in integrated medicine and wellness in South Africa, defines happiness as nothing more than good health and bad memory.

How do we measure happiness? Neuroscience is only beginning to measure brain pleasure. Research thus far has shown that there is a positive impact on emotional health when we "stop and smell the flowers."

Studies have also shown that Filipinos as a smiling people are not doing badly either in carrying the happiness attitude.

cites the database on "Happiness of Nations" of Ruut Veenhoven, professor of Happiness Studies at Erasmus University in Rotterdam. The database showed the Philippines with a score of 6.4 on a scale of 0 to 10 (just behind Singapore's 6.8, and far from the bottom rung of Tanzania at 3.2) on the question "How much do you like the life you are living?"

Another study, the Happy Planet index (combining environmental impact or carbon footprint with human well-being) measured the environmental efficiency with which countries and people live long and happy lives. The Philippines came out with 59.2, not far from the highest score of Vanuatu at 68, and ahead in Asia (including Japan) with a ranking of 17th on a list of 178. The United States got a score of 28.8 and was in 150th place.

HAPPY PLANET INDEX

On a scale of 0 to 100, the ideal is 83.5

Country	Score	Rank
Vanuatu	68	1
Philippines	59.2	17
Indonesia	58	23
Thailand	55.4	32
Malaysia	52.7	44
India	43	88
Japan	42	95
UK	40.3	105
USA	28.8	150
South Africa	27.8	156
Zimbabwe	16	178

HAPPINESS OF NATIONS

On a scale of 0 to 10 How much do you like the life you are living?

TOP	Score
Denmark	8.2
Swiss	8.1
Austria	8.0
Finland	8.0
Iceland	7.8
MIDDLE	
Singapore	6.8
Philippines	6.4
India	6.2
South Korea	5.5
BOTTOM	
Armenia	3.7
Ukraine	3.6
Zimbabwe	3.3
Tanzania	3.2

How not to turn the holidays into a diet disaster

DR. MARIAN ALONZO, a practitioner of natural and integrative medicine of The Farm at San Benito, affirms the food philosophy that the Hippocrates health resort espouses: "Let food be your medicine and medicine, your food."

Our holiday eating traditions lean toward meat-and-cheese platters, sweet desserts, and boozy cocktails, if not highly acidic sodas. It is not exactly healthful fare, which is why the holidays are a time for dietary disasters if we don't watch out.

Alonzo shares nutritional tips to prevent the holidays from turning into a diet disaster. Meant for all seasons, these are not to make people feel guilty in a time of merrymaking but to emphasize that it is best to find enjoyment in the company of family and friends while eating for health rather than enjoyment through unhealthy, tempting foods.

- Vegetables are alkalizing. These will help balance the body's pH which tends to be acidic because of acidifying foods like meat, chocolates, soda, etc.

1. Drink plenty of water

- Especially when you are eating all those Christmas sweets: *leche flan*, rum cake, candies, chocolates, etc. This is to wash down the excess sugar before glucose enters the bloodstream, especially in diabetics and obese individuals. High amounts of sugar get converted to

fats in people with sedentary lifestyle.

- Drink warm water after eating *lechon* and fatty meals. This is to prevent absorption of unhealthy substance into the bloodstream.

2. Include seaweeds as soup or norisprinkled on salad

- Seaweeds contain high amounts of vitamins and minerals. Minerals are necessary for better absorption of vitamins.

- Seaweeds also contain iodine that is

important for thyroid processes. The thyroid is the gland responsible for rate of metabolism.

3. Eat the good fats to counter the bad fats

- Fats are important in nerve conduction and brain functions. Fats are used by the body to absorb fat-soluble vitamins like A, D, E and K. However, fats are also storage bins of toxins. Eat good fat so the body will let go of toxin-laden fats. Sources of

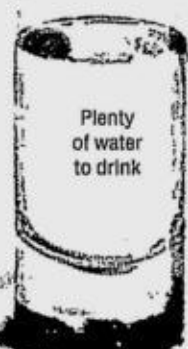
good fats and oils are virgin coconut oil and unheated olive oil, avocados, nuts, etc.

- VCO supports thyroid function and is ideal for those with hypothyroidism or slow metabolism.

6. Include fiber like vegetables, prunes, psyllium husk in your drinks to sweep away toxins from the body and to aid in bowel movement.



Enzyme-rich antioxidant fresh fruits



Plenty of water to drink

Seaweeds

Organic greens and sprouts

The good fats

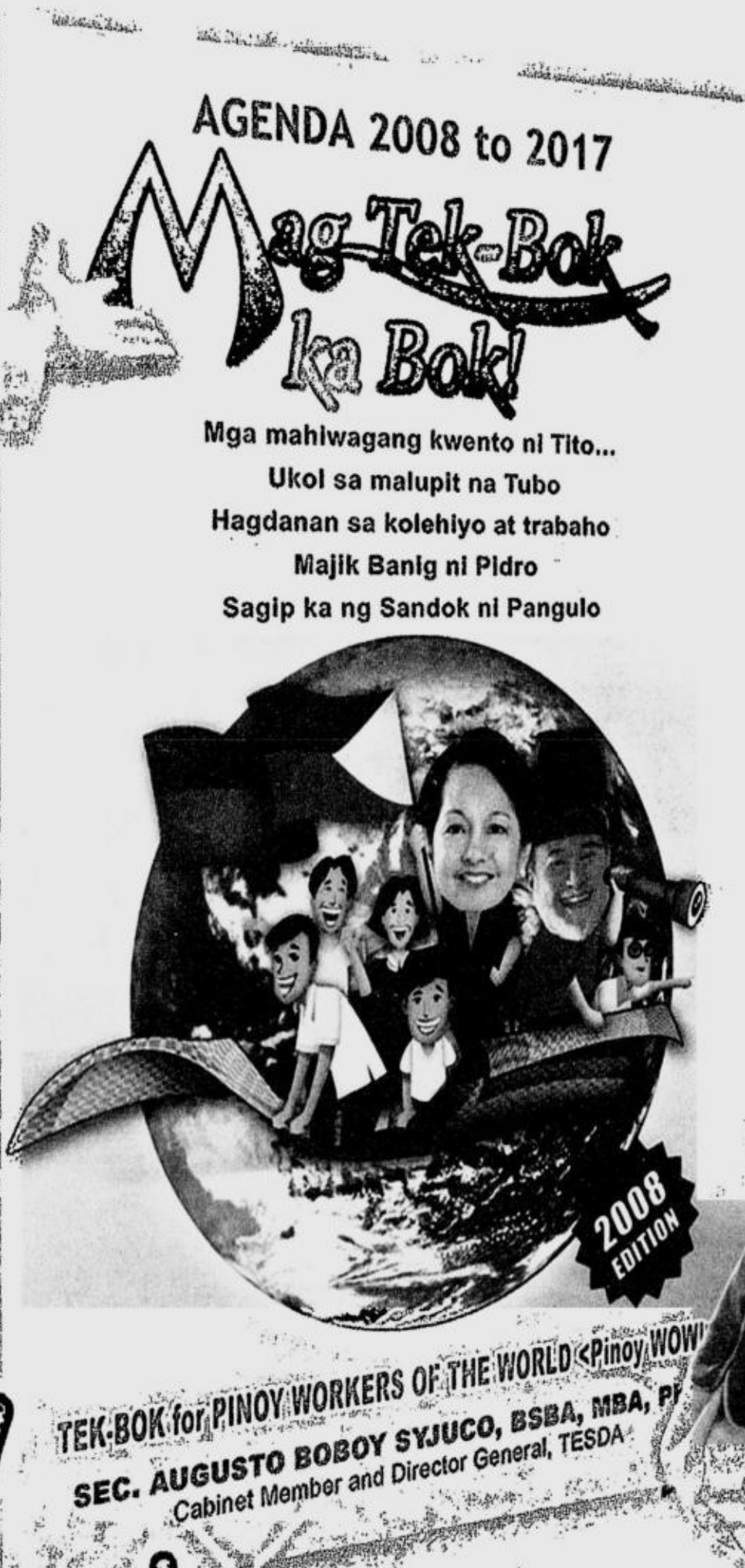
Avocado

Ampalaya

Malunggay

Kumukuti-kutitap na Pasko Regalo ng ating Pangulo Bumubusi-busilak na Career Mo!

Kunin ang iyong LIBRE na Libro
Simula ngayong Enero
Sa TESDA office na pinakamalapit sa iyo!



Merry
Christmas!

Your guide to scholarships, free assessments
and a bright future!



INQUIRER *Mindanao*

Christmastime in Matigsalog village

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
Monkayo, Compostela Valley

THE ROAD TO SIDE-TWO IS AN endless scene of revolting, sometimes depressing, acts of both human determination and the environment—near obliteration yet struggling to survive.

It is in the middle of once lush mountains, now desolate yet still generous to allow people to bask at the remaining thickly carpeted mountain range of Agusan and Compostela Valley, which has become witness to how the Matigsalog people outlast days with only *mondu* (sweet potato) and the constant threat of being homeless again.

The eight-kilometer road to the small Matigsalog community called Side-Two in the village of Naboc is a never-ending walk made worse by potholes and horrible sights of felled giant trees left rotting on wet soil and their standing companions doomed to meet the logger's saw.

Side-Two, run by Datu Dyango Mantikinson, sits on a hilltop overlooking the gold rush site of Mount Diwalwal in Compostela Valley. Unlike its noisy neighbor, it is silent most of the time, except for the occasional whirs of a power generator.

Yes, the village has a generator, but its



YOUNG "lumad" perform the dance of triumph called "bankakaw."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS/MAYFEL PALUGA OF UP MINDANAO



MATIGSALOG children and mostly women adults join the gift-giving activity conducted by students of the University of Mindanao and Sagip.

"It cannot also be avoided that we feel bad and insulted when we don't get good treatment. And so instead of wanting to be happy during Christmas, we harbor ill feelings toward others."

The people of Side-Two would rather starve than beg, the leader says. Solicitation is not part of Matigsalog culture for it demeans their rich culture.

Recently, a group of social work students from the University of Mindanao, some apprehensive of leaving their comfort zones, gave the tribe a little of what they thought had been missing for many years. With gifts of used clothing, school materials and foodstuff, the students brought out smiles from the children and adults.

Accompanying the group were members of the Solidarity Action Group for Indigenous People (Sagip), which has been at the forefront of helping *lumad* communities in Davao in education, training and human rights awareness.

It was one of the rare events when "outsiders" came to give the villagers their *pinaskuhan*. They prefer people coming to their village to give gifts rather than the *lumad* begging for these, Mantikinson says.

Humbling effect

"We are happy that we got all these gifts and we are humbled. But we are happier that you are able to see us and our situation, and feel us. We do not ask for expensive things because we don't need them ... we are grateful that you come to visit us," he says.

But while he pities the *lumad* who endure the insults and apathy of the Christians, Mantikinson says he cannot blame them for invading the city streets during the holidays. "They really need help as they have practically nothing because they no longer own their lands ... they do it because they need to it."

"There is just nothing left for the *lumad*. Most of our ancestral lands are now under the control of capitalists who have turned the once bountiful land to mining sites and banana plantations," he says.

"And the *lumad* are left hungry and dying."

Counterinsurgency

That sorry condition, according to Matigsalog resident Sances Antolan, is abetted by the government's counterinsurgency operations. He cites his experiences several years ago with soldiers who killed one of the tribesmen while pursuing communist rebels.

"The government is considering the *lumad* its enemy. That is why we are often the victims in the government offensives against the rebels," Antolan, 28, claims.

He recalls that in 1996, some 50 soldiers burned the houses in a nearby village called Kalabera (Skeleton) for no apparent reason.

A teenager at that time, Antolan says he and his family evacuated toward the river with nothing but a small blanket. Their crops, he says, were uprooted by the military.

"These have worsened the situation of the *lumad*. In 2004, government soldiers shot us while we were looking for food at the forest. We have told them that we were not rebels, but they did not stop and this resulted in the death of one of our relatives," he said.

Despite all these experiences, Mantikinson stresses how the people in the village refuse to bend and remain hopeful that a bright future awaits them and their children.

"What we want to really have this Christmas are teachers who would be willing to teach the *lumad* children ... we really, really need teachers," he says. At least 40 children need basic education in the community.

Right now, Mantikinson says, the people are happy with their ways and "they would rather that the government will not help them if only the government will not also harm them."

shanties are lit up by gas lamps. The generator is, of course, used by its corn mill station donated by the European Union through the Aid to the Uprooted People Program.

And when the milling station is idle, the generator brings life to a 14-inch color TV that barely picks a clear signal from the lone channel. Children and adults would jam up the village's cooperative store where the tube is strategically placed.

Painful life

At a glance, one sees no hint of disillusionment or worry from their faces—surprising for a community who has gone through a painful experience of being often pushed to the margins by lowlanders.

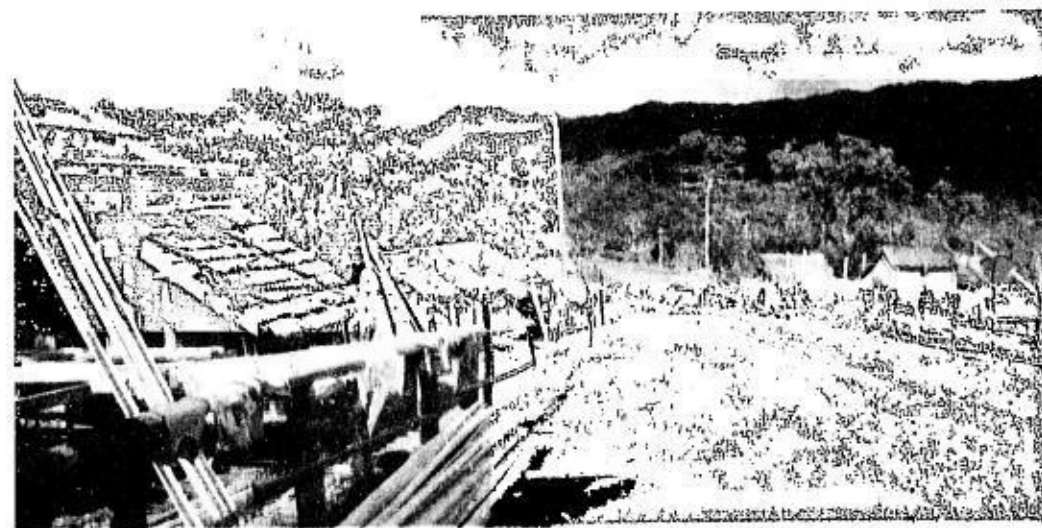
Mantikinson says the people are contented with what they have. The Matigsalog concept of plenty is having each other as happy members of the community, he says, although they desire for a better life in a simple way. They do not wish for material things as these strip them of their dignity.

This is why Mantikinson, through an oral order and agreement he had with the tribe, never allows them to venture to the city during the Christmas season like what other communities of "*lumad*" (indigenous people) do.

"Not one from us left the village to ask for Christmas gifts from the Christians in the city. This was an order to protect the *lumad* from being humiliated," Mantikinson said.

Feeling insulted

"Sometimes, it cannot be avoided that other people will look down at the *lumad* ... there are those who get angry at us and those who refuse to give even a centavo," he says.



SIDE-TWO: Silent village stirred to life when the visiting students came.

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It's playtime and learning for these preschoolers

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BANI, PANGASINAN—FOR THREE HOURS three times a week, preschool children from different villages here gather under a mango tree, a resident's house or wherever there is space for them to stay.

It's playtime for the children, but it is also a time for them to learn the ABCs and arithmetic.

Although the town has 31 day care centers in 27 villages, some children live in communities far from day care centers or elementary schools that offer preschool education, Grace Taganap, municipal social welfare and development officer, said.

Thus the local government decided to establish the supervised neighborhood play (SNP), a sort of home or neighborhood-based learning for children who cannot avail themselves of center-based preschool education.

Some of the neighborhood classes are handled by the mothers themselves who volunteer to teach the children through structured games, storytelling, singing or reciting poems.

Children below 3 years old are given crayons and papers by the barangay officials, who teach scribbling and coloring. The older ones have writing lessons to prepare them for elementary education.

Volunteer teachers

Sometimes, the parent-volunteers will spread canvas under a shady tree and this becomes the instant classroom, Taganap said. When the rain comes, they stay inside a house for lessons.

The top qualification of volunteers is fondness for children, Taganap said. But they are also taught how to make simple daily "lesson plans" and submit daily attendance sheets and class reports.

The project, which was started in San Margarita town in Northern Samar, enables the mothers to work at home or engage in some income-generating activities while their children are under the care of the volunteers.

For seven days, Taganap and two parent-volunteers went to Western Samar to observe and learn how the SNP was being implemented. The volunteers then trained the other mothers who wanted to join the program which was started this school year.

Ten volunteers handle 80 children from the villages of Ranao, San Simon, Dacap Sur and Centro Toma.

But the day care center teachers, who handle 930 children, also do outreach classes in areas without parent-volunteers. Fifteen teachers hold sessions in 15 villages, reaching out to 315 children.

Mayor Marcelo Navarro Jr. said the SNP program, one of the town's projects for children, enabled it to win the Ilocos regional award as most-child friendly in the category of first-to-third-class municipalities.

Better future

But he said the local government had been implementing programs and projects aimed at improving the children's lives and giving them more opportunities for a better future.

One of the projects is the establishment of the child protection unit (CPU), a one-stop venue for child-friendly services on investigation of victims of sexual and other abuses. It provides the victims with medico-legal services and psychological interventions.

The CPU is composed of a police officer, social worker, nurse and a doctor from the Department of Health stationed at the rural health unit.

"Other towns avail themselves of our CPU," Navarro said. Bani was the second town in the country to set up a CPU; the first is San Jose, Occidental Mindoro.

Navarro said the local government also established the barangay civil registration system to facilitate civil registration of babies born in the villages.

Sometimes, the parents are not able to register their children, and problem arises when it's time for the children to enroll in school, Taganap said.

The children of Bani are already empowered, too. Forty-five high school and elementary children were trained to assert their rights and responsibilities. Twenty were trained further to facilitate leadership and planning workshops in the villages.

"They become advocates of children's rights," Taganap said. They planned and facilitated the municipal children's congress in May.

The children's suggestions were included in the planning sessions for the town's development.

The Bani Children Association uses theater arts to convey messages to other children about their rights and responsibilities.

Jolo teachers boycott classes

JOLO, SULU—MORE THAN 600 PROVISIONAL TEACHERS in various elementary schools here have refused to conduct classes since Dec. 4 to protest the non-payment of their salaries and other benefits.

Faisal Kadil, secretary of the Sug Educators Forum Inc., said the teachers, who are non-passers of the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET), have not been paid for seven months now.

The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) government had allowed non-passers to teach if they could secure a Special Permit to Teach (SPT) from the Professional Regulation Commission.

The system was adopted because of

the shortage of teachers in the region.

Kadil said instead of addressing the problem on the non-payment of their salaries, the ARMM government have even branded them as "ghost teachers."

"We were surprised about them calling us 'ghost employees' when we have been teaching even before the ARMM was created," Kadil said.

There was no time when they

stopped teaching as shown by their service records, he added.

There was also no clear announcement from the ARMM government that they were no longer needed, Kadil said.

The protest have caused concern from parents.

Noel Mendoza, a native of Zamboanga who works as maintenance staff at the Notre Dame of Jolo College here, said he could not understand why the ARMM government was indifferent to the teachers' plight.

The newly formed Concerned Parents Association here, has written separate letters to the Sulu Schools Division Superintendent and the ARMM government to address the problem.

But ARMM Solicitor General Frances Cynthia Guiani-Sayadi said the problem was that the appointments of the teachers have already expired.

She said under the rules of the Civil Service Commission, provisional teachers given SPTs could only be employed for five years unless they managed to pass the LET.

"Despite the lack of attested appointments and temporary teaching permits, some of the terminated teachers refused to understand and continued to report to their classrooms in the hope of enjoying the usual leniency of past officials of the ARMM government," Sayadi said. *Ed General, Inquirer Mindanao*



THE UNIQUE and native-looking Christmas tree of Ilocos Sur in front of the provincial capitol in Vigan City is made of abel fabric. LEONCIO BALBIN JR./INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

Laguna couple continues gift-giving tradition

CALAMBA CITY—DESPITE BEING robbed recently and mauled last year, a philanthropist couple in Calamba City is not stopping its regular commitment to feed the poorest of the poor in selected areas in Laguna at Christmas.

The trader-lawyer and his wife, who want to remain unknown to their poor beneficiaries, told the INQUIRER that they would continue to share their blessings to the poor because despite all the terrible trials in their lives, God continued to shower them, their family and livelihood with immense blessings.

According to a police report, at about 9:40 p.m. on Oct. 6, armed men held up the spouses and divested them of their earnings amounting to P2.5 million in cash and an undetermined amount of jewelry.

The police report added that one of the suspects mauled the husband before fleeing.

The husband said these trials had given them insights and had broadened their horizon about the temporariness of life.

But, he said, their practice of feeding the neediest families in selected areas in Laguna this Christmas will push through.

They were preparing about 2,500 food packages needed for "noche buena" for 2,500 poor families in the province.

Among the villages that will receive goodies and food items for their "noche buena" meals this Tuesday are the barangays of Pansol and Aplaya in Calamba City and San Gabriel in San Pablo City.

Squatter families in other depressed parts of Calamba City and several selected areas in the province and in Quezon will also be beneficiaries of their Christmas sharing.

In previous years, the couple also gave food, Christmas presents and

goodies to villagers in Victoria and Pangil towns.

The couple reminded the parish priests and contact persons in those beneficiary areas to see to it that those who are most needy are given topmost priority in receiving the packages that are prepared by the couple themselves.

The couple started this tradition because they were grateful to God for helping them recover a year after they lost millions in a big fire.

This time around, they expressed their gratitude to God for giving them another lease on life despite the terrible ordeal they underwent two months ago and last year's Christmas Day mauling of the husband.

The spouses, however, said they had learned a lot from the double incidents making them now doubly vigilant.

He said he would leave the matter of justice to God. *Romulo O. Ponte, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Firecracker blast hurts passerby

CEBU—ONE PERSON WAS SLIGHTLY INJURED and two houses were damaged when firecrackers exploded early yesterday morning in Sitio Radar, Babag 2, Lapu-Lapu City, an area known as the firecracker capital of Cebu.

Chief Insp. Ricardo Cornelio, head of the Bureau of Fire Protection in Lapu-Lapu City, identified the victim as Ronnie Espacio, who had burns and abrasions in his right shoulder and head.

Espacio was passing by the area when the explosion occurred, he added.

The jealousies, walls and the doors of two houses located several feet from the shanty were destroyed because of the impact of the explosion, Cornelio said.

Bureau of Fire Protection officials identified the owner of the shed as Virgie Bensi, an unlicensed firecracker maker, who immediately ran away after the explosion, Cornelio said.

"She is not allowed by law to manufacture firecrackers because she is not licensed. She has no permit and worse is she is doing it in a place not designated under the law," he said.

Cornelio said Bensi was inside the shed cutting the wick of a firecracker when it suddenly sparked.

Bensi threw the firecracker away in panic but it exploded instead after hitting a stack of chemicals and other firecracker paraphernalia, the fire official said.

The shed is situated in a vacant lot but is surrounded by residential houses only a few feet away. *Jolene R. Bulambot, Inquirer Visayas*

Soldiers beat charcoal-maker, says group

TAGUM CITY—A CHARCOAL-MAKER who was arrested by soldiers on Dec. 12, along with three others on suspicion of being communist rebels, was found alive with stab wounds on various parts of his body.

Kelly Delgado, secretary general of Karapatan in Southern Mindanao, yesterday said Renante Romagos, 29, was now being treated in a government hospital.

Delgado said Romagos and three other persons were arrested by Scout Rangers I in Barangay Casoon in Monkayo, Compostela Valley.

The three others were identified as Daniel Matinood alias Banood, Rolando Turo alias Lando, and Pablo Turo alias Pablo.

But while the three suspected rebels were endorsed to the local police, the soldiers decided to keep Romagos with them, Delgado said.

Lt. Gerwin Maghuyp, spokesperson of the Army's 28th Infantry Battalion, confirmed bringing the three suspected rebels to the

Monkayo police station.

But he said Romagos was not turned over to their custody.

"The units' (Rangers) officials asked me to bring the three to the Monkayo police," he said.

Delgado said based on their interview with Romagos, the soldiers brought him to Barangay Hamiguitan, also in Monkayo on Dec. 16.

"There, they took turns in beating and stabbing him. Then they left him for dead," he said.

When the soldiers left, Delgado said Romagos sought help from some residents who brought him to a hospital.

"By sheer will power, Romagos survived. When the soldiers left, he slowly got up and looked for help. He found a house where he asked for help," Delgado said.

He said Karapatan will pursue charges against the Scout Ranger soldiers, who allegedly abducted and tried to kill the charcoal-maker.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to

get comments from the Scout Rangers in Monkayo.

Maghuyp said he could not comment on the charges against the Scout Rangers because it is a separate unit from the 29th IB.

"They have coordinated with us [for the conduct of the operation] but we do not have control and knowledge of their concept of operations on the ground," he said.

In Surigao del Sur, the chair of the human rights group Karapatan in the province has decided to go into hiding because of fear for his safety.

Rev. Modesto Villasanta Jr. said the 58th IB has intensified the black propaganda against him by circulating leaflets, which depicted him as a communist.

The military was not available for immediate comment.

A teacher at the Diatagon Catholic High School said the soldiers entered classrooms and handed the leaflets to the students. *Frinston Lim and Chris V. Panganiban, Inquirer Mindanao*



THE SELLING of firecrackers and pyrotechnic materials has been confined to public plazas in Iloilo City. ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

Gonzalez: What 'diamond statement'?

By Beverly T. Natividad

EVEN THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE is in a quandary about the existence of the so-called "Diamond Statement" which purportedly links Sen. Panfilo Lacson in a failed coup attempt against President Macapagal-Arroyo last year.

Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff, told reporters about the mysterious document which he said he had seen. Esperon said Lacson's name was in the paper, which he indicated outlined plans for a transition government.

"I'm trying to check it, taking Esperon's

word for it," Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

He clarified however that he had not seen the document despite Esperon's claim that the DOJ had investigated the "Diamond Statement" and would be in a better position to answer questions by reporters about it.

Investigation

"I'm not aware of it. I have not seen it," said Gonzalez. However, he said that it was possible the document was already in his department but that it had not reached his desk yet.

He said if Esperon's claim about the

document is true then it would certainly be investigated by the DOJ.

Asked whether he believes that the paper really exists, Gonzalez said that he did not think Esperon would make claims about a fictitious document.

Esperon talked about the document when he was asked on Friday about Lacson's claim that the extension of the AFP chief's term, which expires when he reaches the mandatory retirement age of 56, would demoralize the ranks.

"He doesn't like me," Esperon replied at the sidelines of the AFP's 72nd founding anniversary. Then Esperon talked about the February 2006 coup

attempt that fizzled after Ms Arroyo declared a national state of emergency.

The military said the plot called on forces officers to withdraw support from Ms Arroyo in a failed bid to ignite another People Power revolution.

Esperon said he saw Lacson's name in the document recovered from the participants of the February failed attempt.

He said the document describes "changes of structures and leadership" and named a leader who would take over if Ms Arroyo was overthrown in the same way that Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV were mentioned in their statement at the Manila Pen.

Lim, a former Scout Ranger regiment commander, and Trillanes, a former Navy lieutenant, walked out of a hearing on Nov. 29, took over the Manila Peninsula Hotel and called for the President's resignation.

Esperon said he would release the mysterious document on his retirement on Feb. 9.

Lacson has denied knowledge of the "Diamond Statement" and questioned the motives of Esperon in tagging him in the failed coup plot after almost two years.

The senator also denied participating in an unconstitutional move to topple the present administration.

Mrs Esperon tells Inquirer: 'I forgive you'

By Nikko Dizon and Fe Zamora

THE CONTROVERSIAL WIFE OF MILITARY chief of staff Hermogenes Esperon Jr. yesterday said she has "forgiven" the INQUIRER for writing what she felt were scathing news reports against her.

"It's Christmas time and I forgive you," Lorna Esperon told the INQUIRER.

The encounter with Mrs. Esperon took place on Friday at a cocktail reception marking the 72nd Founding Anniversary of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) at the commissioned officers' clubhouse at Camp Aguinaldo.

At the same time, Mrs. Esperon took the opportunity to clarify various reports and rumors about her that have been making the rounds of media and military circles.

It was not true, she said, that she boasted that her husband's term as Armed Forces chief of staff was sure to be extended by President Arroyo.

Vacation in Ilocos

"We've already planned our vacation after his retirement. I want to bring our daughters to Ilocos," she said.

At least three sources told the INQUIRER that Mrs. Esperon had been heard in social gatherings talking about her husband's term extension.

But in the story published last Dec. 17, the general had defended his wife, saying she would not do such a thing.

Esperon is set to retire on Feb. 9 next year when he turns 56, the mandatory retirement age for military servicemen.

Mrs. Esperon, a medical doctor, first became the subject of controversy after it was reported that she had "bawled out"—military parlance for a dressing down—the parish priest of the St. Ignatius de Loyola Cathedral at Camp Aguinaldo for failing to mention the Marine soldiers killed in Basilan in his homily last August.

Mrs. Esperon told the INQUIRER she had stopped attending Mass at the cathedral after her story came out.

Loud hoarse voice

She said that while she did get upset over the omission of the slain soldiers' names in the Mass, she did not yell at Msgr. Albert Songco. She reiterated her earlier explanation that she spoke loudly because her voice was hoarse that day.

Mrs. Esperon said she actively promotes welfare projects for soldiers and their families.

In a talk with defense reporters, she once described herself as the "Mother Teresa" of the AFP; at another time, a "silent worker."

"I think I am a nice person. I am a bright girl because I topped my recent Diplomate. That's why my friends cannot understand why I have become the subject of such intrigues," Mrs. Esperon said.

"Ginawa ninyo akong pinakbet. Parang putahe (You turned me into pinakbet. Like a main dish)," she said, chuckling.

For some 20 minutes, Mrs. Esperon sought to clarify other issues about her.

For one, she said, she has never required anyone to call her "Ma'am Duktora."

There was also no truth to rumors that military nurses were being tasked to take care of her daughters, aged seven and five.

'Not true'

On the buzz that she was the reason for the resignation of some members of the Army Ladies' Club, of which she was once an adviser, and of Col. Adrian Quidlat, chief of the Orthopedic Department of the AFP Medical Center in V. Luna: "Not true," she said.

She admitted that she visited Col. Ariel Querubin, one of the alleged plotters of the failed February 2006 power grab, at the AFP Medical Center when he was confined for hepatitis.



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MUSEUM curator Joseph Renta (left) and Asuncion Kalalo, the owner of the items on display at the exhibit. PHOTOS BY EDWIN BACASMAS

SMALL WORLD

Belen exhibit opens San Beda museum

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE TABLEAU WAS A CURIOSITY: Instead of donkeys and lambs, a polar bear, a seal and a penguin stood around the manger, looking at the infant swaddled in white.

Three grade school boys pressed their noses to the glass case and gasped at the sight.

In a small but brightly lit space, the birth of the Infant Jesus was depicted in different ways. Many students flocked to see, for example, an Alaskan version of the Nativity scene.

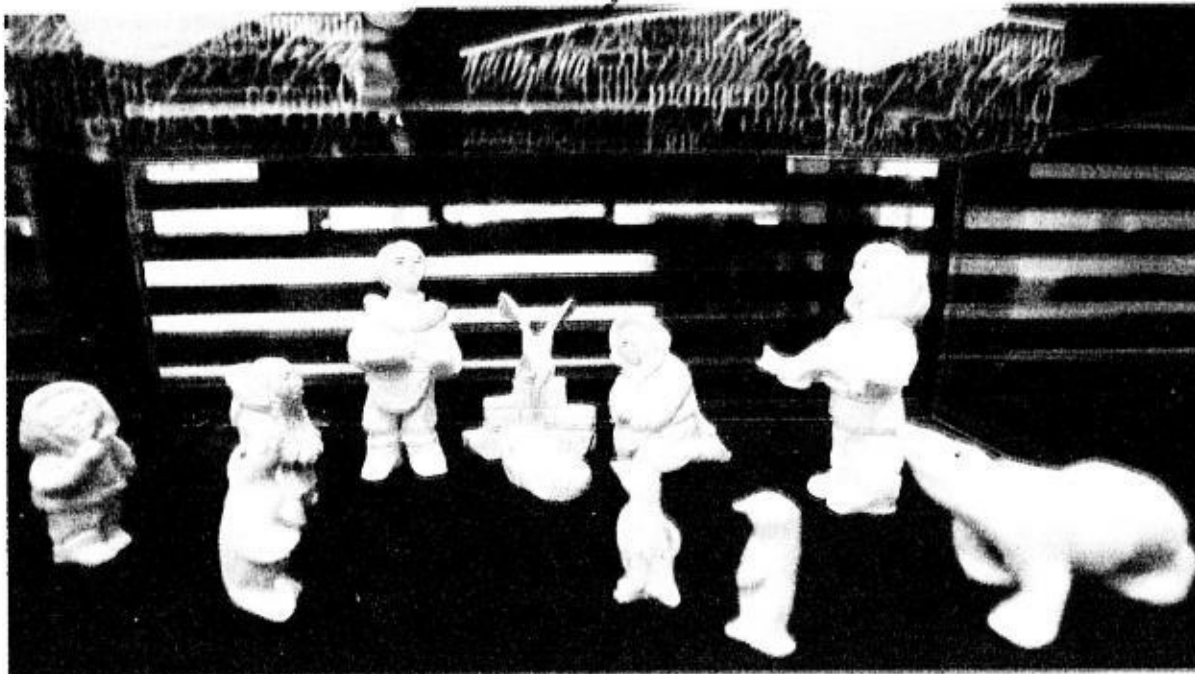
"Sometimes, we hear the kids say, 'I love the museum!' That really means a lot," said curator Joseph Renta of the San Beda College Alabang (SBCA) museum in Muntinlupa City.

The ongoing International Christmas Crib exhibit at the museum features 19 miniature belen (Nativity or manger scene) from Europe, Asia, parts of Africa and the United States.

The items on display are owned by lawyer Asuncion Kalalo who said she has about 350 belen of various sizes, heights and materials—all on display in her home at Barangay Ayala Alabang.

Different belen line the hallway of her house, from the living room to the dining room. The smaller ones are displayed in glass cases.

"I've lost count of them, really," she laughed when asked about the exact figure. She also declined to give an estimate of the value of her collection, jokingly saying that thieves might take an interest.



A CROWD favorite: The belen from Alaska shows a seal, a polar bear and penguins visiting the Baby Jesus.

For an art collector, the items you accumulate through the years are priceless," she said.

Kalalo, a friend of Renta's, decided to lend 19 of her 350 or so pieces to the museum for the Christmas exhibit. This is the first time part of her collection has been put on public display.

The SBCA museum was inaugurated early this month, one of the events leading to the school's 35th anniversary celebration next year.

The cribs exhibit has attracted mostly children to the quiet museum.

"The smiles of the children, their laughter as they peek at the display are more than enough compensation for me.

After all, Christmas is for the children," Renta said.

The museum receives at least 100 visitors a day, mostly students who want to see rare Nativity scenes from all over the world.

Of the 19 on display, three are from the Philippines. The others come from Kenya, Italy, Thailand, El Salvador, Peru, Mexico and Spain.

While Christmas is not observed in some of these countries, Kalalo said each nation

was able to express the nuances of their culture through an "alien" festivity.

"What is important is that any work of art is appreciated by all kinds of faiths. Even those who are not Catholic or Christian can interpret the birth of Jesus according to their culture," she said.

The collector added, "When I decide to collect a piece, I do so because of the art, the way of interpretation, and not because of the price."

The Mexican belen, for example, features a "tree of life" in

terra cotta. The crib from Kenya shows a dark-skinned Blessed Family.

Black volcanic ash from the famous Mt. Vesuvius in Pompeii and glitter are used in the Nativity figurines from Italy.

The Philippines' three exhibits are made of wood, straw and other native materials.

Highlighting the Pinoy culture, St. Joseph carries a wooden rake instead of a staff while the Infant Jesus and the Virgin Mary are dressed in *camisa de chino* and *baro't saya*.

Another Filipino belen shows the Holy Family riding a native cart.

Renta then laughingly pointed out the American version. While the traditional characters are present, the ceramic faces have the tiny black eyes and long nose of a snowman.

"They are made of different materials, and although they may have different touches, the three main characters are always there," Kalalo said.

While the crib exhibit will run only until Jan. 27, family and close friends visit Kalalo's Ayala Alabang home to view the bigger sets.

Kalalo maintains separate collections of various images and tableaux of the Last Supper, as well as different Christian crosses that the museum plans to borrow for its Lenten exhibit.

She said collecting Christian art has become a spiritual journey not only for her, but for those who visit and appreciate her exhibit.

"It's for the spiritual experience and also to see how each country interprets the birth of Christ through miniature art," she said.



A WOODEN belen from Russia.



ONE made out of marble from Peru.



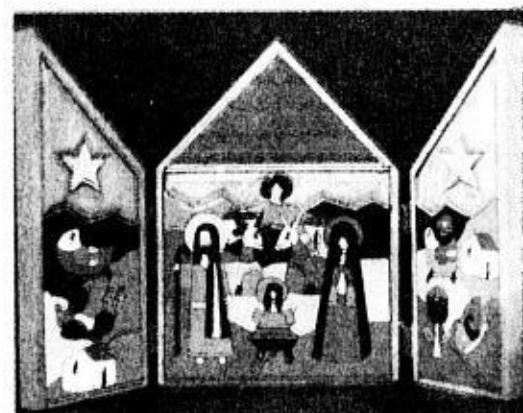
THE MEXICAN "tree of life" belen.



A WOODEN belen from the Philippines which shows Mary and Baby Jesus riding on a karitela and Joseph holding a rake instead of a staff.



FROM Italy, a belen crafted out of volcanic ash taken from Mt. Vesuvius.



ANOTHER Philippine-made belen made of wood.



A WOODEN belen from El Salvador.



A CERAMIC belen from the United States which depicts the Holy Family and a shepherd as snowman.

Go-to person has been holding office at McDo for 20 years

By Ross Harper-Alonso
Contributor

AT 7 A.M., THE SOUND OF music from a church in Greenbelt, Makati City, casts a tranquil spell in the park.

The church hymns signal the start of the morning Mass, and Josephina "Jojo" Gonzales slips quietly into her favorite pew behind the altar of the circular building.

Dressed in a faded polo shirt and a pair of jeans, she sits alone with a somber look. It is soon replaced with a smile as she greets regular churchgoers, mostly office workers and condominium residents.

As soon as the priest gives the final blessings, Jojo walks over to the McDonalds outlet in front of the Asian Institute of Management.

Gofer

"I feel like I want to have pancakes," mused a kindly faced gentleman. "I had that yesterday so I'm deciding between the corned beef and longganisa meal," his friend beside him said.

"If you two can't make up your minds, I'm going to ask Jojo to just bring us three McMuffins and coffee," replied another man.

"Jojo, can you line up for our orders please. Our legs are a little stiff. Get what you want, but don't forget to get our discounts. Keep the change," he

added as he handed her a P500 bill.

After repeating their orders, Jojo thanked him and headed for the counter. To her, these senior citizens, or "the coffee boys" as they are fondly called, aren't just customers—they are also her favorite clientele.

For 20 years, from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day, this McDonalds branch has been Jojo's unofficial "office" where she has managed to carve out a special business niche.

"I run errands and do odd jobs for the people who come here daily," she explained. "I have a group of retirees, bank clerks and businessmen I assist. On some days, they need me to pay their phone or credit card bills, deliver flowers and documents. Sometimes, they send me to Divisoria with money and a list of things to buy. You can say I'm a messenger of some sort, except I don't receive a salary from anyone, only tips. I make enough in a month to rent a room in Pasay, contribute to the water bill, buy food and to pay for my fare to come here."

"Many of the regulars who come here have known Jojo for years," said Ramon Moreno, a Makati resident.

"She has become a reliable

friend. We try to watch out for her the best way we can as long as it doesn't seem like she is a charity case. She'll only accept something in exchange for work," he added.

"Some CEOs have offered Jojo jobs in the past but she chose to stay here. It's apparent the camaraderie and pleasant conversations make her happy," Moreno said.

Although Jojo joins in the merriment, she has maintained a degree of formality with everyone she deals with and has been

careful not to make a nuisance of herself. Her polite manners and vocabulary indicate a proper upbringing rooted in traditional values.

This was clear when Jojo unknowingly participated in Readers Digest's Honesty Test early this year. She went out of her way to find the owner of a brand new cell phone researchers left intentionally on the floor near an escalator.

When asked why she didn't just keep the phone, she replied: "I don't have money, but I wasn't raised to take anything that isn't mine."

This wasn't only simple and unpretentious. It also revealed something about Jojo's private life. Her Castilian features come

from her father's side of the family. He was a Spaniard named Jose Manuel Gonzales who left Jojo, then only three years old, with her paternal grandfather after her mother died.

Jojo's father remarried and she saw him and her half sisters only once until her father passed away in Baguio.

After her grandfather died, her father's relatives took advantage of her naiveté, turning her out of the house and forcing her to live on her own.

Jojo then took on several jobs, including a one-year stint as a cabin attendant for Air Manila in the 70's but none of them lasted for some reason.

Complicated and painful

"I don't like talking about my life because it's too complicated and painful," she admitted. "That's the past and even if I'm alone, I'm lucky to meet people like my best friend Dolores who has helped me through the years. Dolores was the cook in the *carinderia* where I used to eat," Jojo said.

"I had no place to stay and she gave me food and a place to sleep. I earned my keep by cleaning and helping in the kitchen. Dolores now works in Jeddah but I still rent a room in the house where her husband and children live. I'm the god-mother of her daughter," she said proudly.

Just recently, Jojo met Rey de



JOJO GONZALES: She runs errands, shops for other people and delivers flowers, among other tasks.

Guzman, the flower vendor Metro featured early this year.

For 27 years, Rey sold flowers at the intersection of Pasay Road and Makati Avenue and managed to send his five children to school with his earnings. The eldest is now a lawyer while the two others are teachers.

Rey wanted to meet Jojo to help her out, the same way his many friends helped him through lean times. The idea, he said, came from a movie called "Pay it Forward" about a boy who taught people that random kindness should be passed on to the next person and that one good deed deserves another.

"Who else would help Jojo but someone like me who also went through hardship but was able to rise above it with the

help of other people," Rey said.

When Jojo isn't attending to other people's needs, one finds her clearing tables or sitting peacefully in one corner of the fast food outlet doing the crossword puzzle.

It's a heart-wrenching story, but it is also one about the healing, redemptive power of friendship. When she flashes her childlike smile, one catches a glimpse of the acceptance and compassion that has helped her through painful times.

Jojo is proud that she has learned to stand on her own, earning respect in the process. She reminds us this Christmas that even if life throws you a curve ball, the satisfaction of an honest day's work and knowing you've made someone's life better, no matter how small, is enough for one to be grateful.





"I LOOK up to OFWs for their selflessness. Being separated from their families is not easy. But I guess, knowing that they're doing this to secure their family's future makes it all worthwhile."

ALFRED VARGAS, December 2007

GLOBAL Pinoy

Editor Gerry Lirio

Text us your feedback:
inquirer gp name/age/city/message
to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

This section is dedicated to Filipinos overseas toiling on land and at sea, in factories, in construction sites and in the homes of the world, and wherever work can be contracted to secure a better life for their families. These are their stories.

TALES MOTHER NEVER TOLD

Solitary holidays

By Ninotchka Rosca
Contributor

NEW YORK—THE SEASON BEGINS IN LATE November, when Thanksgiving Day rolls around, and lasts till New Year's Day—a time when everyone seems to go around shrieking "yes, you can go home again!", with the city emptying in between bouts of shopping and parties, airplanes taking off and landing virtually every 10 minutes, highways clogged with cars, buses, trucks, as millions undertake the great migration, like salmon swimming upstream.

Ironically, real migrants remain stationary, buffeted by winds of homesickness and extreme alienation, while serving golden brown turkey to their employers' families or spraying the tree with fake snow and remembering how, in the archipelago, one looked at those pretty Christmas cards, thinking how lovely the winter scenery was, but not really understanding what it was all about, in the context of this land half-a-globe away.

Kin want more money

Rosario, 42, worked from November to February, no day-off, trying to alleviate guilt and homesickness by remitting every cent she made, keeping only enough for rent, transportation and food. That didn't help at all; the windfall must have driven her relatives crazy, she said, since from that moment on, not a single day passed without a text message for more money. Mona, 43, wept every night, going about the household chores the following day with swollen eyes and clogged sinuses. Telephone bills quadrupled, as the overseas worker clung to faraway voices, hoping to keep from disintegrating emotionally.

Mona came from Cavite, where Christmas was noisy, the streets thronged with people, the air full of anticipation. "In Warren, New Jersey, which was practically the boondocks, I swear I saw only one person—just one—pass in front of the house all throughout the season. It was culture shock. I cried and cried." She could take just about anything, even the \$250 per month instead of the promised \$900; the vituperation and the physical insults—*batuhin ka ba naman ng maduming damit sa mukha!*—but the "dead-ma" Christmas was just too much. "That inspired me to escape," she said—which took some courage as her employer worked for immigration. "No exchange gifts, no noche buena and what more,

not even a Christmas tree!"

7,000 Filipinas

An estimated 7,000 Filipinas and a sprinkling of Filipinos work as domestics in the tri-state area of Connecticut, New Jersey and New York, making up 10 percent of the estimated 70,000 total domestic workers. Statistics are estimates because roughly between 60 percent-70 percent are undocumented. In truth, US Labor Statistics estimates that a full 20 percent of the 12 million "illegals" in the country are employed by private households—meaning, they clean, cook and care for the children. Mona's employer even demanded that she get a driver's license so she could chauffeur the family around.

Working, on the other hand, only kept one busy, on one's feet the whole day, shifting the weight of homesickness in one's heart from side to side, to keep it from becoming overwhelming. "Even though you're with the family," said Rosario, "well, they're really not your family. They're not blood kin. Isn't that what we mean when we say *kamag-anak*? The child of someone

of your blood. So I just think of Thanksgiving or Christmas or New Year as just another party, with special menus." Once, the season got so painful that she tried to convince her employer to wake the children up at midnight to open gifts instead of on Christmas morning. "I offered to make midnight dinner, you know, *ala-Pinoy*. I even wrote down the menu: Chinese ham, queso de bola, cocoa, pan Americano, leche flan ... And I said no overtime pay, *libre*. They thought that was weird; that I was being weird." That was the last time she thought of teaching her employer family something about being Filipino.

When Christmas begins

Actually, Rosario confessed, for her, the season actually begins in September. "I am already thinking *balikbayan* box—what to put in it, what would make the kids scream with joy, make them think of me with warmth, with love and gratitude ..." Each year, the *padala* gets more elaborate, more expensive and just plain more. "I started with one *balikbayan* box; I'm now up to five. But my friend holds the record, I think; she sends home 30 boxes every year." What does one put in the box? "Anything and everything. A little luxury. Something one doesn't have on a daily basis. Then mix in practical gifts, like towels, underwear, slippers ... I barely shop for myself. My clothes are hand-me-downs from my employer." On Christmas eve, which would be Christmas Day already in the Philippines, she would call home and join long-distance in the ritual of the opening of the boxes.



A DOMESTIC worker holds up a protest flyer while speaking about her experience with an American employer.

"I cry every time. *Para akong tangga, humahagulgol sa telepono.*"

No pity party

To break this state of isolation, the Damayan Migrant Workers Association holds an annual gathering for Filipino domestic workers sometime between Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. Over a hundred always show up for the event, which is renowned for what one called "wall-to-wall" buffet. Many of the organization's 300 members volunteer to cook for the gathering; the organization coordinates the menu and also provides some of the expenses, as cooking for a hundred-plus can be costly. This year, there were 35 dishes and it looked like the members were competing to show who could cook what best. The menu was Filipino all the way, from *kare-*

kare to guinataang tilapia.

Music, dancing and conversation were the main features but there was a program, too, created and presented by the domestic workers themselves, to prevent this holiday gathering from becoming a "pity party." Mona participated in the "street theater" portion of the program. "I just helped hold up this piece of cloth that we used to cover these capitalists," she said. This direct participation of migrant workers in a program, before an audience, was a breakthrough, according to the organization, since the "undocumented" was always reluctant to be in the limelight and out of fear, used to hiding, to not being visible.

Highly literate domestics

As varied as the food was, so were the domestic workers. Some

had UP doctorates; Carmen, who worked as a nanny and housekeeper, having adjusted her status, was now a professor at Brooklyn College, on the strength of her Ph. D. in veterinary medical research. Still others had been life-long domestic workers, like Nora, who became a domestic worker at the age of 12 at Subic Base, worked in Hong Kong for 10 years and has spent another 10 in the US. She is over 60 years old and plan to return to the Philippines permanently soon.

Light in darkness

Mona herself went to college and was working in a factory but lost her job when her entire union was locked out. Despite an intense job search, she was unemployed for two years before leaving the Philippines. An only child, she had to sustain her mother, who was getting on in years and needed medical attention. Her father had passed away when she was 17 years old. "I cannot say if leaving was worth it or not," she said. "I can only say I had no choice." She has no direct relatives in the US but has managed to find a Filipino household to share. "I rent a room and at Christmas time, we try to celebrate like Filipinos," she said.

The Damayan annual gathering brings her something more than just socials. She found one part of the program most edifying: the testimonies of those whose cases (mostly for unpaid wages) had been resolved successfully. This year, three women related their stories. "Listening to such victories, I see a little light in the darkness," Mona said. "If I think over my life, I would say that I had gone through such struggles as are not normal for a woman. So I hear these other women and am reminded that, at least, there is help for us. *May matakbuhan*, if anything untoward happens." It was the best gift for the season.



SINING Pandayan, a theater group of youth and domestic workers, performs at a Christmas party hosted by Damayan Migrant Workers Association.

Why mom will not be home this Christmas

CHRISTMAS IS THE BUSIEST time of the year for Filipinos traveling back to the Philippines. Most of those *balikbayans* prepare their trip several months before their intended departure so they can obtain a leave of absence from their places of employment. Unfortunately, there are some who can't come back home even if they want to celebrate Christmas here in the Philippines.

LIFE Act

Estella, a fourth grader, received news that her mom was finally approved for her US immigrant petition. According to an earlier e-mail she received from her mom, Estella would get to spend Christmas 2007 with her mom. Last week, Estella received an updated news that her mom will still not be able to come home for Christmas.

Estella is sad. She has not seen her mom for seven years. She has been under the cus-

tody of her maternal grandma since her mom left.

Estella has been living with her grandma since her mom left the Philippines for the United States in 2000. The mother has been working as a caregiver taking care of developmentally-disabled children in a residential care facility in California. The mother left for the US in June 2000 using her tourist visa.

In December 2000, then President Bill Clinton signed into law the Legal Immigration and Family Equity (LIFE) Act of 2000 which allowed those who were physically present in the US as of December 2000 to adjust their status as legal permanent residents. Those who were to benefit under this LIFE Act were beneficiaries of either family or employment petitions filed before April 30, 2001.

There were thousands of Filipinos in the health care industry who took advantage of the LIFE Act of 2000. Many of our *kababayans* in the US were petitioned as "caregivers" by health

IMFO

Lourdes Santos Tancinco



care facilities. Unfortunately, however, processing time for petitions of caregivers takes a number of years before final approval.

Other workers

US employment visas are categorized into three starting from the first preference EB1 "priority worker"; the EB2 "advanced degree professionals"; and, the EB3 "skilled workers" or "other workers." There are a total of 120,000 visas per year allocated to these categories.

There are fewer applicants under the EB1 and EB2 categories (which have higher education and skills requirement) than those in the EB3 category. The subcategories for the EB3

visas are the "skilled workers," "professionals" and "other workers." Under the EB3 "other workers" category are those workers whose jobs require less than two years of education or experience. The caregivers fall under this category. For the month of December 2007, only petitions with priority dates of October 2001 are being processed. This means that there is a long backlog of cases and only petitions filed in 2001 are being issued the green cards.

In 2001, the process of obtaining a labor certification was through a regular processing which took several years before being certified by the US Department of Labor. It was only this year that the Backlog Elimination Center of the US Department of Labor finally decided on several hundred thousands of applications filed in 2001.

Estella's mom, a caregiver, is one of the beneficiaries of an EB3 petition filed by her US employer. It was only in March when she received her labor cer-

tification approval. She then filed the necessary papers with the US Immigration Service in July 2007 to obtain her green card.

Estella's mom was told that it would still take several months before her application can be approved due to the fact that there were about 300,000 employment-based applications filed in July 2007.

Processing delay

There are several reasons for the delay in processing of green card applications based on an employment petition. First, it must be understood that there is a perennial backlog of visas under the EB3 "other workers" category especially from petitioners in China, India and the Philippines; Secondly, the labor certifications processed under a regular processing has just concluded most of the applications filed in 2001; and thirdly, the immigration system gives priority to extraordinary ability aliens under the EB1 first preference

rather than the "unskilled" or "other workers."

Long wait

There are several thousands of mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters who have pending petitions with the US Citizenship and Immigration Service who can't come home to the Philippines until they actually receive their green cards. They have invested time and resources into the process and it may take a little while longer before their green cards are finally issued. Most of those who are affected by the long processing delays are suffering the adverse effects of separation from their family. The hope, of course, is that they will be able to reunite once they obtain their green cards. Mom may not be home for Christmas this year but hopefully not for long.

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Saudi foils al-Qaida plot during hajj

RIYADH—SAUDI SECURITY FORCES ARRESTED seven non-Saudi Arabs on suspicion of plotting attacks during the annual Muslim pilgrimage, the Arabic newspaper Al-Hayat reported on Saturday.

The report came a day after the interior ministry said security forces in the oil-rich kingdom, the target of Islamist attacks since 2003, had arrested an al-Qaida linked group planning a "terrorist act" during the hajj.

Security forces "arrested seven people of two Arab nationalities, but not Saudis, at the entrance to the city of Mecca," Al-Hayat said, quoting sources within the security services.

"They were planning acts of sabotage during the hajj period," it said, adding that the arrests were carried on Dec. 16 and 17 but without giving details on the plot.

Al-Hayat said the arrests were not to create panic among the hundreds of thousands of pilgrims to Islam's holiest sites in and around Mecca, western Saudi Arabia.

Saudi interior ministry spokesperson Gen. Mansur al-Turqi said as the hajj was wind-

ing down on Friday that the suspected militants "planned to carry out a terrorist act aimed at harming security and damaging the hajj."

He said the attack planned by a "deviant group," the Saudi term for militants linked to al-Qaida, did not however target holy sites in Mecca or the pilgrims.

Al-Arabiya television said the militants were arrested "three days before the start of the hajj season," or at the end of last week.

The authorities were on high alert this year because of the participation of Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the first president from the Islamic republic to take part in the hajj.

Interior Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdul Aziz said in early December his forces had foiled "more than 180 terrorist operations" since a wave of bombings and shootings by the Saudi branch of al-Qaida broke out four years ago.

The conservative Muslim kingdom also said it arrested 208 suspected al-Qaida militants over the past few months plotting assassinations and an attack on a logistical oil facility.

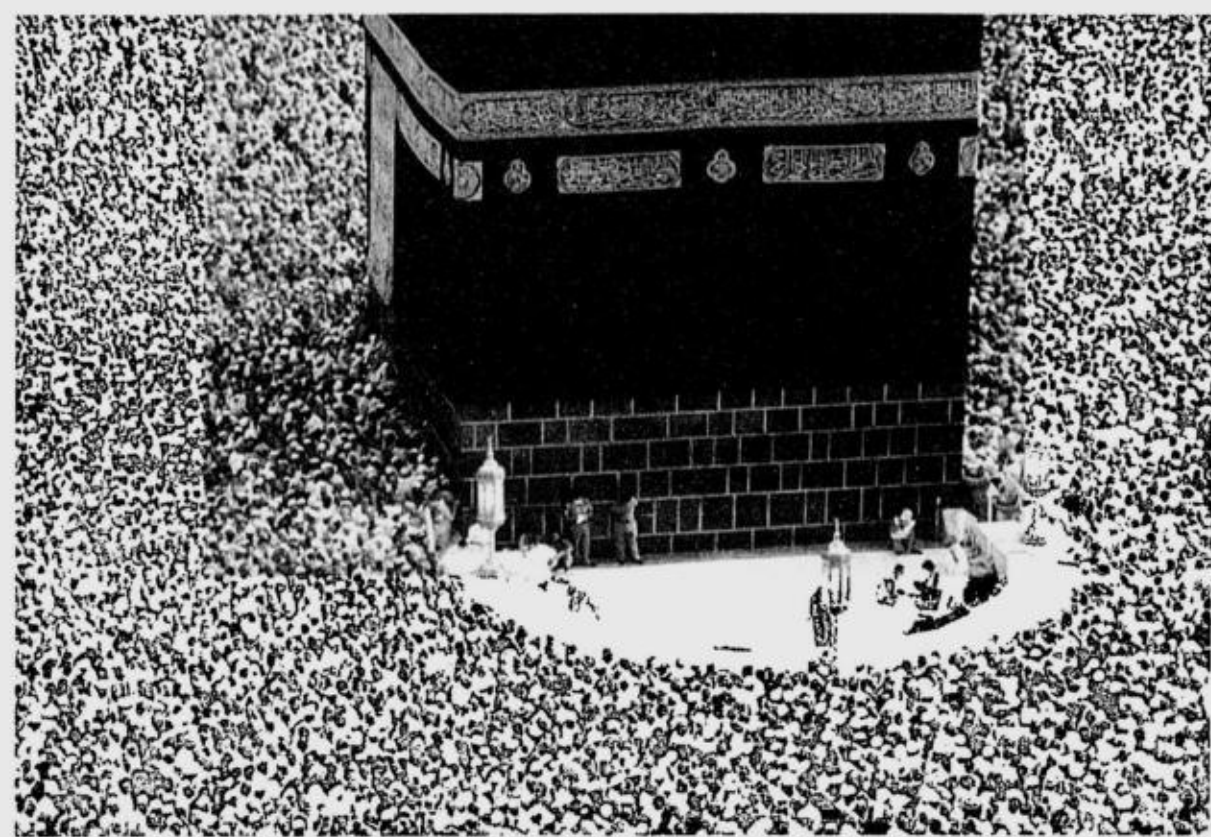
The militants, who are followers of Saudi-born al-Qaida chief Osama bin Laden, espouse the ideology of "takfeer"—branding other Muslims as infidels in order to legitimize violence against them.

The hajj, in which every Muslim is expected to take part at least once in a lifetime if they have the means, has been hit by a series of disasters over the years, mostly caused by stampedes or fires.

There were no major incidents reported during this year's hajj.

However, in December 1979, 151 people were killed and 560 wounded after Saudi security forces stormed the Grand Mosque in Mecca to rescue pilgrims held hostage by Islamist militants for about two weeks.

And in July 1989, one person was killed and 16 wounded within the Grand Mosque sanctuary in a double attack blamed on 16 Kuwaiti Shiites who were executed later the same year.



MUSLIM pilgrims crouch to perform their fairwell circumambulation around the Kaaba in the holy city of Mecca, on Dec. 21.

Four hundred and two people were killed, including 275 Iranians, according to official Saudi figures, when security forces tried to break up an anti-US demon-

stration by Iranian pilgrims during the hajj in July 1987.

The last of this year's pilgrims took part in the "stoning of Satan" ritual on Friday at Mina,

east of Mecca. After hurling pebbles at pillars representing the Devil, they returned to the Grand Mosque before preparing to head home.

Thais vote in 1st polls after coup

BANGKOK—THAILAND CAST THEIR BALLOTS on Sunday for the first election since last year's bloodless coup, under the close watch of the military and the looming shadow of deposed Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

The generals who toppled Thaksin's twice-elected government in September 2006 say the weekend polls will restore democracy in Thailand, where about 45.7 million people are eligible to vote.

But observers question how free and fair the elections can be as more than one-third of the country, including Thaksin's strongholds in rural northeastern provinces, is still under martial law.

"This is not a normal election. It is being held under pressure from the military," said Ukrist Pathmanand, professor of political science at Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University.

"There have been no real policy discussions in this election. The only issue here is whether you love Thaksin or hate Thaksin," he said.

Despite living in London in self-imposed exile since the coup, Thaksin remains the dominant figure in Thai politics.

His political allies in the People Power Party (PPP) said at their final rally late Friday in Bangkok that Thaksin would return to Thailand for the first time on Feb. 14, after a new government is formed.

"Thaksin said if he came back before the government is formed, he would be accused of trying to make more trouble," PPP's deputy leader Chalerm Yoobamrung told the cheering crowd.

The party has successfully rallied the remnants of Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai (Thais Love Thai) party, which was disbanded by the military, and quickly moved to the top of opinion polls going into the election.

The party draws most of its support from farmers, the majority of Thailand's 64 million population, who remember the deposed prime minister's efforts to boost the rural economy during his five-year rule.

Spaniards bet in world's richest lottery



LOTTERY numbers are displayed in the center of Madrid on Friday Dec. 21, the day before the Christmas Lottery known as El Gordo, or "the fat one."

MADRID—PEOPLE THROUGHOUT SPAIN waited anxiously to see whether their Christmas festivities would get off to a jingling start on Saturday with a lottery billed as the richest in the world.

From 9 a.m., ticket holders were glued to TV and radio sets as children from a school in Madrid picked out numbered balls from drums and sang out the winning numbers in a ceremony that lasts some three hours.

The lottery, dubbed "El Gordo," or "The Fat One," is to dish out a total of 2.2 billion (\$3.1 billion) in winnings to tens of thousands of ticket holders throughout Spain. The grand prize is euro 3 million (\$4.3 million).

The lottery, which began in 1812, comprises 185 number series with each series divided into 85,000 tickets. The tickets are sub-

sequently divided into 10 "decimo" shares worth euro20 (\$28.7) each and that can earn a prize of euro300,000 (\$430,000). Most Spaniards share tickets or "decimos" with family, friends and co-workers.

An estimated three-quarters of the country's population of just over 40 million take part in the lottery.

Although other lotteries have bigger individual top prizes, the Gordo is ranked as the world's richest for the total sum paid out. Instead of jackpots, this lottery spreads the wealth with thousands of numbers yielding prizes ranging from the face value of the 20-euro ticket upward.

Spain holds another big lottery Jan. 6 to mark the Feast of the Epiphany. It is known as El Niño, or the child, referring to the baby Jesus.

Fujimori apologizes for abuses

LIMA—FORMER PERUVIAN PRESIDENT Alberto Fujimori acknowledged on Friday that human rights abuses happened under his rule and apologized to families whose loved ones were killed in a war against leftist insurgents.

"I ask for forgiveness," Fujimori, 69, said at his trial on human rights crimes that could put him in jail for up to 30 years. "This pained my soul."

Despite the apology, Fujimori denied ordering a government death squad to kill 25 people and kidnap two others in the 1990s, when Peru was battling the Maoist guerrilla group known as the Shining Path.

While in power from 1990 to 2000, Fujimori defeated the guerrillas and brought order to a chaotic economy, but critics said he violated human rights to end a 20-year war in which nearly 70,000 people died or disappeared.

Human rights activists said his



FUJIMORI

apology was insincere and came too late.

"This is part of his strategy to avoid being convicted," said Gisela Ortiz, whose brother was one of 10 suspected leftists killed

in the La Cantuta University massacre.

"He had 15 years of opportunities to ask families for forgiveness for the crimes committed in this country," she said.

In 1992, security forces seized 10 people from La Cantuta University, killing them and dumping their bodies in a shallow grave. In 1991, they gunned down 15 people at a barbecue in the Barrios Altos neighborhood, among them an 8-year-old boy.

Last week, the Supreme Court sentenced Fujimori to six years in prison for sending an aide to steal incriminating documents from the house of Vladimiro Montesinos, who served as Fujimori's intelligence chief and is now in jail.

Chile extradited Fujimori to Peru in September after seven years in exile to face trials on charges of abusing human rights and corruption.

US gov't denies CIA tapes showed torture

WASHINGTON—US GOVERNMENT lawyers flatly denied on Friday that videotapes destroyed by the CIA contained any scenes of the torture of terror suspects in the Guantanamo Bay prison camp.

"It is inconceivable that the destroyed tapes could have been about abuse, mistreatment or torture of detainees at Guantanamo Bay," Justice Department lawyer Joseph "Jody" Hunt, representing the White House, told the court.

US District Court Judge Henry Kennedy had summoned attorneys for the government and for "war on terror" prisoners at Guantanamo Bay to give oral arguments on whether the agency violated its 2005 order to preserve any possible evidence of detainee mistreatment at the US prison camp in Cuba.

The scandal came to light earlier this month when CIA chief Michael Hayden told staff in a letter that in 2005 the agency had destroyed tapes showing the interrogations of two al-Qaida suspects.

Hunt said the tapes were made in 2002, and that neither of the two men shown "was at Guantanamo Bay during the taping of these videos." He did not comment on why the tapes were destroyed.

But a lawyer for Guantanamo detainees who were not shown in the tapes asked the court to call an inquiry into whether the government violated the order by destroying the videos.

"Where there is smoke there is fire," lawyer David Remes said. "We have a smoking gun, as it were, with respect to the government's destruction of potentially relevant evidence." "The rev-

elation of the CIA's destruction (of the tapes) raises serious questions about whether the government has complied with the court's order ... and its more general obligations" to preserve evidence.

"The government's destruction of potentially relevant evidence ... raises our concern about its handling of other relevant evidence," including in the case of one of his clients, he argued.

In 2005, judge Kennedy had ordered the preservation of "any evidence of torture, mistreatment and abuse of detainees" who were at Guantanamo Bay at the time of the order in June 2005.

The tapes reportedly show the suspects undergoing waterboarding, in which prisoners are subjected to a process of simulated drowning that is widely considered torture.

WORLD BRIEFS

Strong quake hits Indonesia

JAKARTA—A strong 6.4-magnitude earthquake struck the eastern Indonesian province of Papua on Saturday, meteorologists said, but there were no immediate reports of casualties or damage. It struck at 4:11 p.m. at a depth of 40 km, 183 km west of the provincial capital of Jayapura, the US Geological Survey said. The local meteorology office registered the quake at 6.0 on the Richter scale. An aftershock of 5.3-magnitude hit 22 minutes later, the meteorology and geophysics agency said in a statement.

Travel company collapses

LONDON—Tens of thousands of Britons have had their Christmas and New Year holiday plans ruined after a travel company collapsed although they will all get a full refund, administrators said on Saturday. Travelscope Holidays, which was based in Gloucestershire but traded under a number of different names, was placed in administration on Friday. "For those customers who already have a booking for future travel with the company we can advise that unfortunately the company cannot fulfill its obligations to any passengers," a statement on the firm's website said.

Picasso painting stolen

SAO PAULO—Thieves who stole a valuable Picasso painting from a Brazilian art museum this week apparently didn't have to work very hard. On Friday, officials admitted there wasn't much of a security system in place at the cash-strapped museum. Thieves broke into the Sao Paulo Museum of Art—home to one of Latin America's most important collections—before dawn on Thursday and grabbed Pablo Picasso's "Portrait of Suzanne Bloch" and Brazilian painter Candido Portinari's "The Coffee Worker."

Belgium tightens security

BRUSSELS—Belgian police boosted security in Brussels on Friday amid fears of a possible Christmas attack after they foiled a suspected plan to free an al-Qaida sympathizer from prison. Justice officials said that 14 suspected Islamists had been arrested in a swoop linked to the plan, which allegedly was to include the use of weapons and explosives. "An attack could be being prepared," Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt warned.

Illegal Amazon products

BRASILIA—Brazil has banned the sale of farm products from illegally deforested areas in the Amazon in an attempt to reverse months of increasing destruction in the world's largest rain forest, officials said on Friday. A decree signed by President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Friday imposes fines for buying or trading goods such as beef or soy produced on illegally deforested properties.

Handog saya ng SMART para sa DOLE



In celebration of 74 years of service to the country and Filipinos here and abroad, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) held day-long festivities last December 7. The event drew around 3,000 employees from the 16 DOLE and 12 attached agencies. Officials and staff gathered at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium and Rizal Memorial Track Oval to participate in a colorful and exciting feast for the senses.

As DOLE's partner in various programs, particularly helping OFWs, Smart Communications, Inc. (SMART) gave full support to the event through the "Handog Saya ng SMART" entertainment treat. Smart is the Philippines' leading wireless services provider with over 28 million subscribers on its GSM network.

With the theme, "DOLE sa 74: Serbisyong Laan sa Mamamayan, Laan sa Bayan," the event paid tribute to the department and its personnel who serve some 36.1 million workers locally, around 4.6 million Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), and employers in 782,980 establishments nationwide.

"SMART salutes DOLE's hardworking men and women headed by Honorable Secretary Arturo Brion," said Jojo Malolos, SMART Head of International Business of the SMARHub Financial Services Group, as he addressed the crowd. "We are honored to be your partner in serving our fellow Pinoys here and abroad."

Danilo Mojica, SMART Wireless Consumer Division Head added that it is fitting for SMART to support the celebration as the company consistently partners with DOLE and its agencies like Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) in advocating for the welfare of OFWs. "This is a manifestation of our critical collaboration and strong partnership with DOLE," seconded Lito Villanueva, Head of SMART's Solutions Consulting and Program Management Group.

"We thank SMART for supporting DOLE's 74th anniversary, said OWWA Administrator Mariano "Nitoy" Roque, who chaired the celebration. "We look forward to more opportunities and years of partnership," he added.



Grand Mardi Gras festival

The day began with a Holy Mass followed by a breakfast for DOLE officials and guests, including SMART representatives. The festivities kick off followed, featuring a grand parade of national festivals as presented by DOLE employees. DOLE participants gamely entertained the crowd, wearing multi-colored costumes and embellished headdresses while brandishing huge banners and native crafts. They performed festival dances with gusto, impressing the audience with the results of less than one month's preparation. The top three performances were later awarded. These include the Sinukuan festival by DOLE Region 3 (first place), Alikaraw by OWWA (second place) and Sandugo by employees from DOLE Region IV-B, Bureau of Working Conditions, International Labor Affairs Service, and Information and Publication Service (third place).

Exhibiting the country's rich cultural heritage, the activity also featured the following festivals: Panagbenga, Kadayawan, Pintados, Ati-atihan, Mud Pack, Dinagyang, Sinulog, Pahiyas, Kinabayo, Pinyahan sa Daet, Zamboanga Hermosa, Masskara and Flores de Mayo.

Special features and highlights

During lunch, DOLE personnel were treated to special numbers from homegrown talents. They also crowded around the SMART booths, which were open the whole day. These featured innovative products and services, including SMART Buddy and SMART IDD that allowed DOLE employees to learn more about the products designed for the Filipino worker. Prizes were also up for grabs.

During the awarding ceremonies, CARAGA Regional Director Chona Mantilla was recognized for her excellent service that has made her one of the outstanding officers in the said region. Awards were also given to the winners of the competitions which started since August.

Handog Saya ng SMART

Hosted by funnyman and SMART Buddy endorser Epy Quizon, SMART's entertainment treat allowed DOLE employees to enjoy almost two hours of great music, entertainment and surprises.

"Handog Saya ng SMART" featured Noy Volante, who crooned and serenaded the crowd with popular love songs. Meanwhile, Bloomfields rocked the house with popular songs by The Beatles, Elvis Presley and Jerry Lee Lewis.

Videotaped messages from celebrities were also aired. Melissa Ricks, Matt Evans, Rachel Alejandro, Dominic Ochoa, Rhian Ramos, Martin Nievera and Rufa Mae Quinto all greeted DOLE a happy anniversary. The same group also greeted OWWA Administrator Roque who was celebrating his birthday.

But SMART's entertainment treat did not end there. Some lucky DOLE employees also went home with special prizes. SMART raffled off 16 cellphones—one winner for each of the 16 DOLE agencies, and 32 gift packs—two winners for each agency.

The celebration comes to a close

In keeping with the spirit of solidarity and teamwork that marked the day's events, all present joined hands in singing "Tagumpay Nating Lahat". But even after the revelry has ended, the celebration of life continues, and DOLE begins its 75th year filled with energy and optimism.



DOLE and SMART: Partners for the welfare of Filipino workers



"DOLE and SMART share the same vision of providing relevant services and opportunities to Filipino workers here and abroad," said Jojo Malolos, SMART Head of International Business of the SMARHub Financial Services Group.

SMART is committed in pursuing this long-term relationship by supporting DOLE's various programs and services. These include the National Reintegration Program, which provides assistance to overseas workers when they return to the country; the Migrant Workers' Day; and OWWA's Ko Lang Program, which offers livelihood opportunities to unsuccessful OFWs.

"We see the tangible economic benefits that this partnership with DOLE would bring the country, especially those benefiting OFWs," explained Lito Villanueva, head of SMART's Solutions Consulting and Program Management Group. "SMART aims to enhance the significant OFW remittance inflows which have been one of the key economic engines that sustain our economic progress."

SMART also offers a lot of services for OFWs. "We were the first to launch a text-based remittance service in the world," said Malolos. SMART Padala is low-cost, secure, fast and reliable. Migrant workers who wish to get all the necessary services may avail of SMART Pinoy. This includes calls, SMS, remittances, and broadband services offered by SMART subsidiary, SMART Broadband, Inc.

"SMART Pinoy is a program geared toward servicing all the requirements and needs of both our land-based and sea-based migrant workers," explained Villanueva. It is the perfect package for the 120,000 OFWs expected to come home this Christmas.



SMART
THE POWER TO LEAD

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ **Hapee** gains finals, keeps slate perfect /A25



Sunday SPORTS

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■ **Young Trail** Blazers stretch run to 10 /A26

Tugade, Seigle power Magnolia

Games Today (Cuneta Astrodome)
4:30 p.m.—Talk 'N Text vs Sta. Lucia
6:50 p.m.—Alr21 vs Coca-Cola

By Musong R. Castillo

CAGAYAN DE ORO—LORDY TUGADE and **Danny Seigle** combined for 57 points to lead Magnolia to a 104-92 victory over Alaska yesterday and help the Beverage Masters snap their three-game losing streak in the Smart PBA Philippine Cup out-of-town match at the Xavier University gym here.

Tugade scored 22 of his night-high 30 points in the second half, most of them when the Aces crept threateningly close, as Magnolia won for the first time in almost two weeks to tie the Aces in fifth spot at 8-7.

It is a critical position to be in at this stage of the tournament since only the top five teams will be assured of slots in the playoffs, the top two automatically advancing to the semifinals and the next three entering the quarterfinals.

Tugade, the 6-foot-2 swingman out of National U, hit 11 of his 13 fourth-quarter points inside the final 8:25, including back-breaking triples and a layup in a telling 14-2 run that gave Magnolia a 94-81 lead with 5:10 left.

Alaska absorbed a second straight loss that denied the Aces a chance to gain solo third place, just half-a-game behind the second-running Red Bull.

The Beverage Masters, who topped almost every pre-season poll only to struggle in the tournament despite a virtual all-star squad, actually broke away late in the third period, also behind Tugade, before the Aces came to within 80-79.

SEA GAMES TOPNOTCHERS

They may have combined to lead the Philippines to its worst showing in the Southeast Asian Games, while the country was defending its overall crown to boot, but President Macapagal-Arroyo still feels that the athletes deserve some sort of reward for their efforts in Thailand. Thus, yesterday, at the Malacañang Palace's Heroes Hall, President Arroyo handed out cash incentives to gold, silver and bronze medal winners of Team Philippines, led by SEA Games Male Athlete of the Year and swimming sensation Miguel Molina (sixth from left). Story on A23. LYN RILLON



But Tugade went to work again, hitting two triples that sandwiched a Seigle tip-in of his own miss and Magnolia piled up six more points against a lone Hugnatan basket for that 13-point lead.

Seigle finished with 27 points.

Meanwhile, Coca-Cola hopes to extend its five-game winning streak when the red-hot Tigers slug it out with athletic

Air21 today at the Cuneta Astrodome.

The Tigers, who have been growling as loud as they could since Asi Taulava arrived via a trade from Talk 'N Text, and the Express take the floor at 6:50 p.m. just after the Phone Pals break their third place tie with the Sta. Lucia Realtors at 4:30 p.m.

Coca-Cola has won its last five games.

The latest Coca-Cola win was an 84-82 squeaker over defending champion Barangay Ginebra Friday night, sparked by a Ronjay Enrile three-point play in the final 9.1 seconds of a game where the former MVP shot just 10 points but grabbed a season-high 26 rebounds.

"I just try to help my team win, whichever way I can," Taulava said. "The important

thing is that the team is winning."

The scores:
MAGNOLIA 104—Tugade 30, Seigle 27, Villanueva 15, Hontiveros 14, Tenorio 9, Peña 8, Racela 2, Ildefonso 2.

ALASKA 92—Hugnatan 21, Cortez 14, Miller 13, Thoss 11, Cariso 10, Ferriols 9, Dela Cruz 6, Bono 4, Laure 2, Quilahan 2.

Quarters: 22-all, 43-46, 75-66, 104-92

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Grieving Bata to defend Master of the Table title

POOL MAESTRO EFREN "BATA" REYES defends his crown against a star-studded cast of challengers led by new American pool hero Shane Van Boening when the 2008 Derby City Classic gets underway on Jan. 4 to 8, 2008 in Louisville, Kentucky.

The 53-year-old Reyes, top campaigner of Puyat, Sports, earned \$20,000 by winning the

Derby City Classic Master of the Table bonus.

Completing a 1-2-3 finish for the Philippines in last year's edition were Rodolfo "Boy Samson" Luat and Francisco "Django" Bustamante.

"The Derby City Classic will be my first event abroad in 2008 and I will do my very best for flag and country," said Reyes,

who is grieving the death of his older brother Fermin on Thursday night, in Filipino.

Reyes, the 1999 Cardiff World Pool champion, ruled the Derby City Classic One Pocket Event crown and emerged runner-up in the Derby City Classic bank pool event.

Acknowledged Philippine pool godfather Aristeo "Putch"

Puyat said he is hopeful that Reyes will perform well in the Derby City Classic, which normally draws a field as tough as the US Open 9-ball.

Reyes will leave the country on Jan. 2 along with Bustamante and reigning National Open champion Lee Vann Corteza of the Negros Billiard Stable.

Meanwhile, Reyes ranked

13th in this year's Player Money List after earning \$54,355. Van Boening took the top spot with \$106,307.

Reyes, the 2005 and 2006 Player Money List topnotcher, said he failed to win a major event this year because of arthritis. Reyes added that he also took part in fewer tournaments. **Marlon Bernardino, Contributor**



REYES: Arthritis is the culprit.



MIGUEL Molina (center) beams as GMA shows off his incentive checks. With them is SEA Games chief of mission Monico Puenteveilla.

RP bets get incentives from GMA

By June Navarro

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO yesterday handed out the cash incentives amounting to P10.3 million to the Filipino medalists of the just-concluded 24th Southeast Asian Games in Thailand.

The cash bonus were given to 228 athletes who accounted for 41 gold, 91 silver and 96 bronze medals that failed to stop the country from landing sixth overall after ruling the biennial meet here two years ago with 113 gold medals.

Swimmer Miguel Molina received nearly P400,000 from the President during the cash presentation at the Heroes Hall of the Malacañang Palace after bagging four gold medals that made him the 2007 SEA Games Male Athlete of the Year in the 11-nation meet.

Coaches and team gold winners also received cash rewards from GMA based on the formula stipulated in Republic Act 9064.

Better known as the Sports Incentives Act, RA 9064 rewards P100,000 to individual gold

medalists in the SEA Games, P50,000 to silver medalists and P10,000 to bronze winners.

The gift-giving was over in less than 30 minutes but the President stayed on and mingled with the athletes, who later feasted on a sumptuous *merienda* of pancit, pasta, pork barbecue, *puto*, pudding, cakes and other desserts.

Bacolod Rep. Monico Puenteveilla, the Philippine chief of mission in the SEAG, presented the athletes to the President in the affair also attended by Philippine Sports Commission chair William "Butch" Ramirez and Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco.

Also present were PSC Commissioners Ritchie Garcia, Ambrocio De Luna, Eric Loretizo, POC secretary-general Steve Hontiveros and national sports associations officials.

Molina, now with nine golds since the 2003 Vietnam edition, also won a silver and a bronze apart from the four golds, which included a victory in the 4x100m medley relay.

Monico named RP Olympic 'chief'

By June Navarro

LEAVING BEHIND THE BITTER memories of the Southeast Asian Games, the Philippine Sports Commission and the Philippine Olympic Committee joined forces and officially began the drive to the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

The long trek to China started yesterday after the country's top sports officials unanimously ap-

pointed Bacolod representative Monico Puenteveilla as Philippine chief of mission in the quadrennial Games next year.

"I'm really honored to be named chief of mission of the national team to the Olympics," said Puenteveilla during President Macapagal-Arroyo's awarding of cash incentives to the medalists of the Southeast Asian Games.

"It's going to be the best Olympics presuming no, untoward incident will happen so the preparations should begin now," added the weightlifting chief and first vice president of the Philippine Olympic Committee.

POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. and PSC chair William "Butch" Ramirez will spearhead the core group of officials who will closely monitor the preparation of athletes along with Puenteveilla, POC secretary-general Steve Hontiveros and two

more POC officials.

"After the holidays, our group will meet at least once a week and tackle the issues concerning the country's Olympic drive," said Puenteveilla.

Taekwondo's Tshomlee Go, Mary Antoinette Rivero, boxing's Harry Tanamor, swimming's Miguel Molina, JB Walsh, Daniel Coakley and Ryan Arabejo and Mark Javier of archery have qualified for the Olympics.

2 big races at San Lazaro today

By Musong R. Castillo

CARMONA, CAVITE—THE FINEST three-year-olds get the chance to graduate from their ranks with a bang today when they campaign in the rich Grand Presidential Derby at the San Lazaro Leisure Park here.

A three-cornered fight for the P3.6 million top prize lens with ES Twenty Six sure to be sent off as the first pick, Treasured Ack as the second choice and Golden Sutter the far third option in the 2,000-meter classic.

Jessie B. Guce will steer the three-year-old bay filly ES Twenty Six, a versatile charger who has proven her worth running either in front or in the middle of the pack.

John B. Cordero will be Treasured Ack's partner, while Jeffryl Zarate will pilot Golden Sutter, the

Massive Chestnut colt whom owner Hermie Esteguerro describes as a "bridesmaid for many occasions now."

Legendary, who will be ridden by Patty Dilema, and Henry D' Eight, who will be under veteran Antonio A. Alcasid, are the other chief threats.

Post time will be around 5:25 p.m.

Macedonian (Rm Mamucod), Storm Signal (EL Blancaflor), Pearl Buck (KB Abobo), EJ's Magic (DH Borbe), Pound for Pound (RK Hipolito) and former Juvenile Grand Championship winner Defiant (Val R. Dilema) round out the field.

Real Spicy and Empire King, meanwhile, renew their rivalry earlier when they collide in the Philracom Year-End Invitational spread over the mile with a total of P1 million up for grabs.

The two champion chargers, though, don't exactly headline the seven-horse cast with Native Land, under Ferdinand Raquel, tipped as the slight first choice.

Zarate will ride Real Spicy, the Real Quiet out of Spicy Tale son who won 14 consecutive races last year on the way to winning the Horse of the Year award.

JM Ladiana will be Empire King's partner, while ace Jonathan Hernandez will handle Jet Sutter, a long shot who looms as a good protection bet in the 4:15 p.m. race.



SANTA ARCHERS: The UAAP champion De La Salle Green Archers visited kids at the PGH pediatric wards yesterday as a way of sharing their Christmas blessings. Team captain TY Tang cheers up one-year-old Kenji Arsula with a bag of goodies.

Car staked in Rotary golf event

BAGUIO CITY—A BRAND NEW car will be the major hole-in-one prize in four holes during the 22nd annual Rotary Golfing Fellowship Foundation of the Philippines Inc. (RGFFP) tournament set Jan. 16-20 at the Baguio Country Club and John Hay Golf and Country Club courses here.

Two of the featured holes will be at BCC and the other two at John Hay.

Many other juicy prizes will be up for grabs in the tourney which will be highlighted by a medical and dental mission where around 400 indigent families will be benefited. Set on Jan. 17, the medical and dental event will be supported by United Laboratories Inc.

Tournament fee is P6,000 per participant. This includes free practice round in each golf course, green fee for both courses, three fellowship cocktails/dinner, giveaway (golf shoes), raffle prizes and four mulligans for two days.

For more details, contact Pauline Sevilla of the RGFFP Secretariat at tel. no. 7248174, fax no. 7215940 or email rgffp1987@yahoo.com.

Mighty Menthols capture fourth MABL diadem

MIGHTY MENTHOLS PEPPERED Nougat Candy with three pointers to prevail, 81-72, and bag the championship of the Manila Amateur Basketball League (MABL) recently at the Arellano gym in Manila.

Edrick Ferrer, the Manila University of the Philippines stalwart, topscored with 19 points for the Mighty Menthols, whose 15 triples took the sting out of Nougat Candy early on.

Terence Tang also finished in double figures for the newly crowned champions with 18 points. Dominic Uy contributed 12 points and Wowie Evangelista 9.

Mighty Menthols, backed by Gerry's Grill in its title campaign, led from start to finish and erected several 18-point spreads along the way.

The team made it to the one-game championship by beating Sulpicio Lines, 95-88, in the semifinals. That time, it was Ferrer who sparked.

The title was the fourth for the year for the Mighty Menthols, also the champion of the MABL 1st and 2nd conferences.

Criterium GP nat'l finals up at Clark



THE PRIME movers of the 2007 Hitachi Criterium Grand Prix national finals are Leo Hsieh (second from left), Henry Tan, Lolita Ching and Niso Mondo.

THE 10-LEG 2007 Hitachi Criterium Grand Prix dubbed the Clark Freeport Zone in Angeles City, Pampanga, today.

Project events director Ric Rodriguez said nearly 400 cyclists will be vying in the last stage of the races which have crisscrossed the country.

"We are proud to have been a partner of these popular criterium

contests, Leo Hsieh, Hitachi Air conditioning Products, Inc., Phils president, said. "Hopefully, we can do more for cycling."

The event is backed by the Clark Development Corp. led by president and CEO Liberato Laus.

At least 24 tents will be set up for teams that will take part in the Masters, Executive, Non-Pro and Open divisions.

"The atmosphere will be festive," said Rodriguez.

Compton sizzles as CKP 168 snatches 7th crown

ALEX COMPTON SIZZLED WHEN NEEDED most to power CKP 168 to its seventh title this year.

Compton totaled 22 points and dished out seven assists as CKP 168 routed erstwhile unbeaten Polymaster Kings, 81-52, on Friday in the championship game of the National Basketball League Invitational tournament held at the CCP gym in Quezon City.

The 5-foot-11 Compton's court savvy earned him MVP honors as CKP 168 avenged an 81-80 overtime loss to Polymaster Kings in the elimination round.

Also contributing to CKP 168's cause were Marlon Kalaw with 12 points, Axel Doruelo, 12, Jay-R Estrada 11 and Joshua Manthe 10.

The Polymaster Kings were led by Jeff Sanders, Joel Ballesteros and Angel Raymundo with 10 markers each.

The scores: CKP 168 (81)—Compton 22, Kalaw 12, Doruelo 12, Estrada 11, Manthe 10, Hubalde 8, Santos 4, Legarde 2, Cacha 0, Flor 0, Fong 0, Capali 0. Polymaster Kings (52)—Sanders 10, Ballesteros 10, Raymundo 10, Matias 9, Lim 6, Litonjua 2, David 2, Burtischer 2, Dizon 1, Mendoza 0.



CKP 168 MEMBERS and supporters, led by playing team owner William Fong, jubilate after clinching the title.

Christmas wishes

STA. LUCIA governor-team manager Buddy Encarnado guffawed when I relayed the observation of old friends who saw him at a party I recently hosted.

They said he looked good, fit and handsome after all these years; that he looked even better than decades ago when he was much younger.

Buddy said that's probably what winning does to a man. In the past, the Realtors always wallowed somewhere down in the team standings. But this season, Santa Lucia's fortunes have changed. The Realtors are tied for third place with Talk 'N Text and Alaska, teams they had beaten earlier.

The team's arduous training and preparation both here and abroad are finally paying off, according to Buddy.

Actually I had called him for my annual "Christmas Wish" column which I have taken very seriously since TNT governor Ricky Vargas' wish was granted in a most dramatic fashion some years ago.

Four or five seasons ago, about this time of year, Ricky was at the ninth floor balcony of the Makati Medical Center tensely puffing on his Mild Seven Lights when my text message asking for his Christmas wish reached him.

Almost on impulse, Ricky wished for the immediate and full recovery of his close friend and PLDT associate, who was at that very moment undergoing surgery in the same hospital to remove a malignant growth in his kidney.

Ricky got his wish. The operation was successful, and by some miracle, there is not the slightest trace of the malignancy today, "as if it had never been in his body".

According to Ricky, Santa has granted his wish every year thereafter "and much, much more."

"And because of this, I will not be asking too much from him this Christmas. Isang Talk 'N Text championship lang, that's all. This season, ha," Ricky said.

"Oh, and please tell Santa that this wish could easily be granted if only he could help improve the officiating in the PBA."

For a while I thought Santa might have to divide the two titles between Talk 'N Text and Sta. Lucia this season.

But Buddy wished for something else. "Before we finally close our eyes, I hope to see the day when we become Asian champion once more, enabling us to play in the Olympics," Buddy texted.

Now I'm not certain if Santa would grant the other wish, but I'm sure he reads this column, and if you've been more nice than naughty, maybe he would. Here are the other Christmas wishes:

"I want to have peace in my heart, just plain happiness with my family and loved ones."—Ateneo's Chris Tiu.

"My wish for Christmas is to have one billion pesos to buy gifts for the Filipino people and to personally give it to them on Christmas day."—Purefoods team manager Alvin Patrimonio

"An Olympic gold medal in 2008."—Smart-PLDT chairman/SBP President Manny V. Pangilinan.

"Vilma's (his wife) full, unconditional recovery (from cancer)."—Lambert Ramos, one of two remaining candidates for PBA commissioner.

"I hope to stay happy, healthy and radically unique in 2008."—BAP-SBP executive director Pato Gregorio.

"Better games from my team."—Welcoat owner Raymond Yu

"To coach at another level."—Harbour Centre-RP coach Junel Baculi.

"I wish I can have Orville Roque's Jaguar. Seriously, I'd like to have a second baby, and I'm praying for my father's recovery from a lingering illness, plus success in my career."—Jacque Ruby, PBL Marketing Manager.

IN HUDDLE



Beth Celis

Hapee gains finals, keeps slate perfect

Harbour forges KO match vs San Mig

GAME TODAY (Rizal Memorial Coliseum)
3 p.m.—San Mig Coffee vs Harbour Centre

By Jasmine W. Payo

WITH ITS STAR GROSSLY OUT OF sync, Hapee Toothpaste still managed to keep its record perfect—and more importantly, book a slot in the PBL finals.

Fil-Am hotshot Gabe Norwood came out flat, but the Complete Protectors survived Toyota Balintawak's late threat to sweep their semifinal series with a 94-91 Game 2 triumph in the V-Go Extreme Energy Drink Cup yesterday at The Arena in San Juan.

Game 1 hero Reed Juntilla rescued the Complete Protectors anew, shooting eight straight points for a 93-88 lead with 36.1 seconds left that stretched Hapee's remarkable run to 11 wins in as many games.

Borgie Hermida, the new San Beda recruit playing only his second game, also provided key baskets that gave the Complete Protectors an 85-80 spread at the two-minute mark.

In the other semifinal pairing, Har-

bour Centre tripped San Mig Coffee, 82-77, to forge a winner-take-all match for the last championship berth at 3 p.m. today.

The Batang Pier broke a 58-all tie with a 13-3 surge for a 75-63 lead early in the fourth.

Rico Maierhofer starred for Harbour with 16 points, 13 rebounds, five blocks and three steals, while TY Tang shone from beyond the arc early to finish with 19 points.

Norwood was a flop offensively, missing all eight attempts from the field. The 6-foot-5 guard, however, had six boards and four assists.

The Complete Protectors nearly blew an eight-point cushion, 91-83, in the last 47 seconds as JV Casio sparked a Road Kings' comeback.

The Road Kings trimmed the lead to just a basket, 93-91, with 8.6 seconds left after Casio sandwiched Jonathan Aldave's two charities with a triple and three foul shots.

A duty foul sent Norwood to the line with 6.2 seconds remaining, and despite splitting his free throws, Hapee's lead stood as Casio's last-gasp triple went off the mark.

Juntilla topscored with 21 points just two days after burying the game-winning trey with one-tenth of a second left in Hapee's 83-80 Game 1 triumph.

The scores:

First Game
HAPEE 94—Juntilla 21, Rodriguez 14, Borboran 12, Hermida 11, Mercado 9, Daa 5, Norwood 5, Sagundel 5, Hugnatun 4, Grijaldo 4, Espiritu 2, Quinday 2, Viray 0.

TOYOTA BALINTAWAK 91—Sta. Maria 22, Aldave 20, Casio 20, Jaime 10, Villanueva 4, Faundo 4, Hayes 4, Dedicatioria 3, Guerrero 2, Jazul 1, Rodriguez 1, Cole 0, Balgos 0, Sena 0.

Quarters: 23-32, 44-45, 70-68, 94-91

Second Game
HARBOUR CENTRE 82—Tang 19, Maierhofer 16, Mercado 11, Gaco 8, Asoro 6, Vergara 6, Gonzales 6, Ababou 4, Taylor 4, Malaban 2, Jahneke 0.

SAN MIG COFFEE 77—Ekwe 21, Custodio 15, Menor 9, Escobal 8, Raffleses 8, Dela Peña 5, Bolocon 4, Pascual 4, Saldua 3, Arao 0.

Quarters: 22-12, 47-38, 62-60, 82-77



ALFIE Grijaldo (right) of Hapee loses possession during a physical rebound scuffle against Richard Cole of Toyota. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Sharks seal 'rubber' match

GAMES TODAY (Rizal ball park)
9 a.m.—Exhibition game
1 p.m.—Manila vs Cebu (Game 3)

By Marc Anthony Reyes

MANILA BUCKED THE ABSENCE of its ace pitcher to nip Cebu, 9-8, yesterday and force the Baseball Philippines Series 2 best-of-three championship duel to the full distance today at the Rizal Memorial ball park.

Second stringer Romeo Jasmin, standing in for top pitcher Charlie Labrador, held his own against the determined band of Cebu batters, giving up 11 hits while striking out three in a no-relief job.

"We really focused on Jasmin, if he does well we have a big chance," youthful Manila team manager Joel Palanog said in Filipino after the scrambling victory.

Labrador and five other players who saw action for the national team that lost its baseball title to Thailand in the recent Southeast Asian Games missed the game to receive their cash bonus from President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday.

The other absentees were catcher Rommel Roja and third base Nino Tator of Manila and Cebu's Joseph Orillana, Jonash Ponce and Fulgencio Rances.

Orillana won the opener of the title series for Cebu, 6-3, with a three-hitter Wednesday.

"We have to make new adjustments when the nationals return to play tomorrow (today)," added Palanog.

The winner-take-all match is set at 1 p.m.

Jarish Inobio shared the limelight with Jasmin, going three for five for the Sharks, who battered Saxon Omandac and Korean Jun Ha-seung for a total of 13 hits.

Omandac was the loser for Cebu, yielding seven hits in the first two and 2/3 innings, including six on top of the third where Manila exploded with a five-run binge to take a 7-1 lead.

The Dolphins rallied, however, scoring four runs in the bottom of the third for 7-5 then got another run in the fourth to cut the lead further to 7-6.



EDWARD Landicho (left) of Manila makes it safely to third base as Anthony Olayver of the Cebu Dolphins tries to make a catch. RODEL ROTONI

Boxers lead Scoop-Bacolod honor roll

AN IMPRESSIVE CAST OF ATHLETES consisting of two world boxing champions, an Asian Games gold medalist, a Southeast Asian Games triple gold winner and two homegrown golfers making waves abroad head the list of awardees for the Sports Communicators Organization of the Philippines-Bacolod Awards for Outstanding Athletes of Negros Occidental.

Leading the roster of awardees

are WBO junior bantamweight tist Gerry Peñalosa of San Carlos City and WBO minimumweight ruler Donnie Nemes of Murcia and Bacolod City; named co-athletes of the year, Scoop-Bacolod president George Liza announced yesterday.

Bacoleño Joan Tipon who won the bantamweight gold medal in the Asian Games in Doha, Qatar, and Cauayan town's Arnel Ferrera, who ruled the SEA Games hammer

throw event for the third straight time in Thailand recently, are also in the honor roll.

The awarding rites, to be keynoted by former Scoop-Bacolod president and now sports commissioner Eric Loretizo, will be held at 3 p.m. on Dec. 29 in Bacolod City.

Also making the honor roll are James Yap, Reynel Hugnatun, Juvic Pagunsan and Mia Piccio.

Cedelf Tupas, Inquirer Visayas



BASKETBALL PARTNERSHIP: Sherwin Tiu, St. Jude representative to the Board of Metro Manila Tiong Lian Basketball Association, Christian Tan of BAP and Burlington's Dexter Tan and Rudy Tan agree to join hands for the Tiong Lian Basketball Tournament next month.

Guba earns Aussie Open juniors berth

By Cedelf Tupas
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—NEGROS OCCIDENTAL tennis player Martina Guba achieved another milestone, earning an invitation to see action in the prestigious Australian Open Juniors' Championship in Melbourne in January next year.

The 14-year-old Guba was handed a spot in the juniors' event of the "Grand Slam of the Asia-Pacific" owing to her year-end ranking of No. 6 in the Asian 14-Under Tennis Series of the Asian Tennis Federation.

Her father-coach, Socrates, said only players in the Top 8 were invited to join the prestigious tournament.

What made Guba's qualification more notable was the fact that she only played three tournaments in the Asian circuit but gained 930 points.

The points came from her triumph in the Agri Cup in Manila in October, a semifinal finish in the Riffa Views Cup in Bahrain and a finals appearance in the Asian 14-Under Championships also in Bahrain.

Martina played the least tournaments among the players in the Top 8. India's

Natasha Palha, who defeated Guba in the final of the Asian 14-Under Championships, finished the year on top with 2280 points from six tournaments.

Martina will leave for Melbourne on Jan. 8, 2007, Socrates added. Part of her itinerary is to meet the world's top players who will compete in the tournament like defending men's champion Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Maria Sharapova.

Guba will be the first Negrense to play in the Australian Open, Socrates said. Another Filipino, Casey Alcantara, played in Melbourne two years ago.

Clark race puts up P1.8-M prize

THE CLARK FREEPORT INTERNATIONAL Marathon kicks off next year with organizers setting up a race route that meets international standards and putting up a total pot of P1.8 million.

Already, runners from Singapore, Malaysia, China and Korea have sent word of their participation, the organizing Clark Development Corporation announced yesterday.

Determined to comply with international standards and regulations, CDC sought and got the sanction of the Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association (PATFA).

Acting as race director is veteran marathon organizer Rudy Biscocho, who will be using the newly acquired chip timing system by AMB, the same timing system widely used in big international events such as the Boston and New York marathons.

The marathon is set on Jan. 13 next year. For details, everyone is invited to log on to www.clarkmarathon.com or call 7279987.

Text us your feedback: inquirer.sprt name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Globe)

Young Trail Blazers stretch run to 10

PORTLAND, OREGON—THE PORTLAND TRAIL BLAZERS were expected to have another rebuilding year after losing their future franchise player to injury before the season even started. Instead, they have won 10 straight—the longest winning streak in the NBA this season.

Martell Webster scored 19 points while Brandon Roy and LaMarcus Aldridge each added 18 in Portland's 99-96 victory over the Denver Nuggets on Friday night. It was the second win over the Nuggets in less than a week.

"Who would have thought Portland would do that?" Roy mused about the streak. "You'd think it would be Dallas or Phoenix."

Portland has not won as many consecutive games since the Blazers were victorious in 12 straight in the 2001-02 season.

"It's hard to say they're creeping up on teams. They are a hot team and they are playing well right now," said Denver's Carmelo Anthony. "Everything they throw up is going in and they are playing together right now."

Anthony and Allen Iverson each had 34 points for the Nuggets. Anthony added 12 rebounds.

Portland, the youngest team in the NBA, started the streak with a win Dec. 3 at Memphis, after going 5-12 to start the season.

Seven of the 10 wins have come at home, where the Blazers are 12-3.

"We're a young team but we're growing up. We're maturing a lot during this win streak," Roy said.

The Nuggets were without starting forward Kenyon Martin. He left in the second half against the Rockets with a leg injury and did not return.

Lakers 106, Sixers 101

In Philadelphia, on a night Julius Erving and Philadel-

phia's 1983 championship team was honored, Andrew Bynum and the Los Angeles Lakers spoiled the celebration.

Bynum scored a career-high 24 points and grabbed 11 rebounds to lead Los Angeles.

Kobe Bryant took 10 of his 20 shots in the first quarter and finished with 19 points. He left his hometown with the Lakers' first regular season win in Philadelphia since 2000.

Celtics 107, Bulls 82

In Boston, Paul Pierce scored 15 of his 22 points in the third quarter and Boston won easily over Chicago.

Pierce went 4-for-4 from 3-point range in the third before sitting out the fourth. Recovering quickly from their only home loss of the season, Boston never trailed in the game and never gave up its double-digit lead after 10 consecutive points made it 40-22 with 7:50 left in the first half.

Mavericks 102, Clippers 89

In Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki scored 30 points to help Dallas win its fifth straight. Nowitzki has scored at least 30 in his past three games.

The Clippers have lost 12 of 15 games. Dallas led by 12 at the half, but Los Angeles opened the third on a 15-6 run to briefly threaten.

OTHER RESULTS: Pistons 92, Grizzlies 67; Jazz 113, Magic 94; Hawks 97, Wizards 92; Bobcats 105, Knicks 95; Timberwolves 131, Pacers 118.



PORTLAND Trail Blazers forward LaMarcus Aldridge scores against Denver Nuggets center Jerami McConny in second half of NBA action on Friday.

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feeling

Informing and inspiring Filipino readers for more than two decades through balanced news and fearless views, the Philippine Daily Inquirer has undoubtedly become the country's number 1 newspaper. We share this honor with you, our readers, and our heartfelt thank you for making the Inquirer a part of your daily reading habit.

As we celebrate our 22nd anniversary, Inquirer grants Number 1 wishes of 22 loyal readers - from a simple wish of meeting your local idol to an adventurous one like spending a weekend with your family in Palawan. Let us know what you really want. In 300 words or less, tell us:

- 1) How long have you been reading the Philippine Daily Inquirer?
- 2) What do you like most about the Inquirer, and we dare ask, what do you like least?
- 3) What is your number 1 wish that Inquirer can grant you, and why?

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b) Postal Mail.

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3) You may only send one (1) entry. In the event that you send more than one entry, Inquirer will honor your first entry. All other entries will be disqualified.

4) Include the following information in your entry:

- a) Full name
- b) Residential address
- c) Landline number
- d) Mobile number
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5) Philippine Daily Inquirer will accept entries from 12:01 AM of December 9, 2007 to 11:59 PM of January 9, 2008 only.

6) As Philippine Daily Inquirer is on its 22nd year, twenty-two (22) best entries will be chosen by a panel of Inquirer editors and executives.

7) Winners will be announced in Inquirer on January 22, and notified through postal mail.

8) Winners must present at least one (1) valid ID with photo (school, company, government) and the notification from the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

9) Prizes can be claimed at the Philippine Daily Inquirer head office.

10) Taxes will be paid by the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

11) Prizes not claimed within sixty (60) days from receipt of notification will be forfeited in favor of the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

12) Winners shall agree to have their names and photos published in the newspaper or announced in any mode or manner of advertisement as the Philippine Daily Inquirer may deem appropriate.

13) In case of dispute, the Philippine Daily Inquirer's decision shall be final.

14) All employees of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, their relatives up to second degree of consanguinity or affinity, and of its advertising agency, are not allowed to participate in this promo.

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

Mayweather giving up boxing for martial arts?

DALLAS—BOXER FLOYD MAYWEATHER Jr. this week discussed competing in mixed martial arts.

Mark Cuban, owner of the Dallas Mavericks NBA team and a mixed martial arts promotional company, confirmed the meeting after the Mavericks game Friday.

"We're definitely going to work together," Cuban told The Associated Press. "It's just a question of in what capacity. You just don't jump from being a boxer to an MMA fighter overnight. He's got to test the waters."

The story was first reported by ESPN.com.

The 30-year-old Mayweather rivals Bernard Hopkins as the best pound-for-pound fighter in the world and boxing's No. 1 drawing card. His fights this year with Ricky Hatton and Oscar De La Hoya gener-

ated \$3.25 million pay-per-view buys, more than \$200 million in revenue and earned him about \$50 million.

Cuban's promotional company HDNet Fights has put on two events so far, the latest in Dallas on Dec. 15. The bouts are shown on Cuban's HDNet.

"It would be huge," Cuban said. "He's an icon in boxing. He's conquered that world. He is the champ and he wants to be the biggest grossing all-time champ as well. Having him work with MMA and HDNet Fights would be huge. It would take it to a whole other level."

Mayweather and Cuban became friends when they were contestants this year on the celebrity ballroom dancing talent show "Dancing with the Stars." Cuban was Mayweather's guest at the Hatton fight in Las Vegas on Dec. 8.

Ochoa, Brady: AP Athletes of the Year

NEW YORK—MEXICAN golfer Loren Ochoa was the overwhelming choice as the Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year, winning the award for the second straight year.

Tom Brady, who led the New England Patriots to 14 consecutive wins and was on pace to break the NFL single season touchdown pass record of 49, was the Male Athlete of the Year.

Ochoa received 71 votes from members of The Associated Press in the United States, equal to the combined total of the next seven athletes below her on the list.

She joined Annika Sorenstam, Kathy Whitworth, Mickey Wright and Babe Za-

harias as the only golfers to win the award in consecutive years. Sorenstam won three straight before Ochoa took it in 2006.

"Being compared with such exceptional players makes me feel honored," Ochoa

said in an e-mail from Mexico. Justine Henin, who won her third straight French Open title in tennis, was second with 17 votes.

Brady received 51 votes, 18 more than runner-up Roger Federer, the Swiss tennis star who won his fifth consecutive Wimbledon and fourth consecutive U.S. Open titles, his 11th and 12th Grand Slam titles.



TOM Brady



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IN THIS ISSUE

■ **Emerging taipans boost**
Pinoy entrepreneurial spirit /B2

■ **From McDonald's**
to Taba Taba /B3

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ANTONIO "Tonyboy" Floirendo Jr., vice chair, Anflo Management and Investments Corp. (left) aerial view of the Floirendos' vast banana plantation

PHOTOS BY ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

The younger Floirendo wants to see the group become less dependent on agriculture

Going beyond bananas

Tonyboy Floirendo to steer the Anflo group into new territories

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

PANABO, DAVAO DEL NORTE—ANTONIO R. "TONYBOY" Floirendo Jr. was supposed to take over as chair of Anflo Management and Investments Corp., the flagship company of the Floirendo group on his 56th birthday.

The ceremony and the speech had already been prepared and his family had backed the momentous move.

But the former three-term representative of the 2nd district of Davao del Norte turned down the offer, saying that the position still rightfully belongs to his father, Antonio Sr.

Antonio Sr. of Bauan, La Union was one of many intrepid Ilocano businessmen

who saw great opportunity in the "Land of Promise" that was Mindanao after World War II.

Thus he left his successful hardware and equipment supply business in Manila and came down with his young wife, Nenita del Rosario, to Davao City in 1947. He proceeded to painstakingly build the group from a Ford dealership into the multibillion-peso agriculture-based con-

glomerate that the Anflo group is today.

The Floirendos own, among others, Tagum Agricultural Development Co. (Tadeco), which runs the country's largest banana plantation.

"You still have a lot to do," Tonyboy told his 92-year-old father in a mix of Bisaya and English before the enthusiastic crowd, "so you can't go yet."

But while Antonio Sr. still holds the reins, much of the leather is in the hands of Tonyboy, a management graduate of Boston University, who is determined to steer the Anflo group into new territories.

Tonyboy told the *INQUIRER* on the flight back to Manila that his plan was to make the Anflo group less dependent on the

revenues from agriculture and agriculture-related logistics and more involved in other equally profitable sectors, such as real estate.

The younger Floirendo revealed that plans were underway to develop some pieces of property bought through the years by his father to take advantage of the boom in the industry.

The Anflo group, he said, would definitely take in partners in recognition of the fact that developing land into condominiums, mixed-use developments or industrial estates is not one of the group's strengths.

Its most recent major foray into the real estate market involves the development of

a 9-hectare property in Davao through a partnership with Ayala Land Inc.

The project estimated to cost P2.3 billion is the two groups' latest joint venture after the Regency condominiums in Salded Village, Makati City.

Anflo, through unit Damosa Land Inc., also invested in Microtel Davao Inn and Suites, the first Microtel in Mindanao that opened on Tonyboy's birthday last Dec. 15.

Tonyboy has been able to spot these new areas of interest with the help of his friends, one of whom is former Trade Secretary and SGV and Co. chair Roberto V. Ongpin.

GOING/B2

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

The blind spot

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell



AFTER WORLD WAR II, A GENERAL and his young lieutenant were traveling by train in England. When they boarded, the only seats left were across from a beautiful young lady and her grandmother. The soldiers sat facing the ladies. As the train pulled out it went through a long tunnel. For about ten seconds there was total darkness. In the silence of the moment, the train's passengers heard two unmistakable sounds—a kiss and a slap. Everyone on the train had their own perceptions as to what happened.

The young lady thought to herself, "I'm flattered that the lieutenant kissed me, but I'm terribly embarrassed that Grandmother hit him!"

The grandmother thought, "I'm aggravated that he kissed my granddaughter, but I'm proud she had the courage to retaliate!"

The general wondered, "My lieutenant showed guts to kiss the girl, but why did she slap me by mistake?"

The lieutenant was only one who knew what had happened. For, in the brief moment of darkness, he had seized the opportunity both to kiss a pretty girl and slap his general.

Blind spot

Blind spots are the areas where we are in the dark about ourselves. We

are oblivious to our blind spots, and they may wreak havoc on our leadership. In a previous column, I began a discussion of leadership blind spots by looking at the dangers of a self-centered perspective. In this article, I'd like to examine another widespread blind spot—insecurity.

The Blind Spot—An area in the lives of people in which they continually do not see themselves or their situation realistically. This unawareness often causes great damage to the people and those around them.

Blind spot: Insecurity

Personal insecurity may be the most widespread blind spot in leadership. Insecurity causes a leader to think selfishly when the very essence of leadership is to focus on others. Insecure leaders place their followers in jeopardy, put the organization in peril, and even endanger themselves.

Telltale behavioral signs make insecure leaders easy to spot. First, insecure leaders have a hard time giving credit to others. Insecure people operate from an internal deficit. They are empty inside, and as such, they are constantly seeking affirmation. Bottom line: Insecure people are needy people.

A second symptom of an insecure leader is the habit of withholding in-

formation. Communication can be a form of empowerment, but insecure leaders conceal it to gain control. They may even leverage information to manipulate those they lead. By releasing information a leader demonstrates trust and confidence, whereas withholding it belies a fear and insecurity.

Crab mentality. Another warning sign of an insecure leader is the habit of feeling threatened by the growth of others. Instead of empowering those they lead, an insecure leader may deliberately stunt the growth of followers. A classic example comes from observing a bucket of crabs. If one crab is trapped in a bucket, it will have no trouble climbing out. However, if several crabs are trapped, they will never escape. As soon as one begins to climb toward freedom, the others will pull it back down. Like the crabs, insecure leaders habitually drag down those

around them.

A final quality of insecure leadership is micromanagement. Insecure leaders are control freaks. Distrustful, they have tight reigns on everyone and everything.

Shedding light

As a leader, how do you fix a blind spot when you can't even see it?

1. Ask those who know you best to identify your blind spot.

For instance, I've asked my assistant, Linda Eggers, for feedback on my blind spots, and she has kindly and candidly helped me to discover them.

My Blind Spot: Since I assume right motives in those around me and believe in the importance of a great attitude, I do not always give a timely and realistic assessment of the people and situations around me.

I couldn't have articulated this blind spot on my own. I needed someone else to verbalize it for me, and Linda enabled me to see it.

2. Openly discuss your blind spots with your inner circle.

Be transparent with your inner circle about your recurring blind spots. You will need to rely on your team to counterbalance your personal weaknesses.

3. Assume your blind spots cannot

be removed by you.

Remember our definition of the Blind Spot—"An area in the lives of people in which they continually do not see themselves or their situation realistically."

I have had the same blind spots my entire life. I've learned to compensate for them, but I've never been able to remove them.

4. Develop and empower a team to cover your blind spots.

I've been able to avoid the pitfalls of my blind spots by surrounding myself with quality people. For instance, whenever I face a major business decision, my brother, Larry, goes with me. He is much shrewder than I am in the business arena, and his perspective covers the deficiencies in my vision.

Delegation can also save you from the dangers of a blind spot. My tendency to see the best in others and to put my faith in their potential has led to some horrible hiring decisions. My organizations didn't start to hire better people until I quit being the one who hired them.

Merry Christmas everyone!
For information on John Maxwell's in-house or public leadership or teamwork workshops, please email us at bingericta@gmail.com or call 813-2049/2732i. God bless!

Emerging taipans boost Pinoy entrepreneurial spirit

WE'VE OFTEN HEARD OF INSPIRATIONAL stories about Filipino-Chinese taipans who have excelled in business and are now ranked as the wealthiest Filipinos.

Emerging is a new breed of businessmen who are becoming examples of the entrepreneurial Pinoy.

While the taipans showed that poverty is no match for an enterprising spirit, these new breed of businessmen prove that Filipinos are also capable of building conglomerates, carving their own success stories and putting their country on the global business map.

They are the new Filipino taipans. And they attribute success not just on hard work because today it takes more than that to survive in business. These men are passionate about their respective ventures; are proponents of quality and excellence; and have great visions of the things to come. Here's a short list.

Sen. Manuel "Manny" Villar Jr.

From his childhood days selling seafood in the market the astute Senator Villar has emerged as the fifth in Forbes magazine's list of "The Philippines' 40 Richest." But success did not come by easily; Villar had to switch careers until he found an opportunity in the sand and gravel business and pitched in a capital of 10,000.

The business flourished. Villar went on to develop residential subdivisions, the most known of which were Camella and Palmera Homes, through Crown Asia that is now under the holdings company called Vista Land and



SEN. MANNY VILLAR

Lifescapes Inc.

Dr. Rolando Hortaleza

The chair and CEO of Splash Holdings, already among the country's 300 largest corporations, now markets products in over 20 countries and with virgin coconut oil as one of his prime products. A major player in developing a market for skin whitening products, Hortaleza's company is now the sixth largest player in the country's cosmetics and toiletries industry.

Hortaleza and his wife used their P12,000 wedding gift as a startup capital for their business. Today, this business has gone to include a nationwide retail store chain called HBC.

Amb. Jose E.B. Antonio

The founder and chair of Century Properties started his firm with a working capital of P30,000, six employees, and at the worst possible period—six days before the 1986 Edsa People Power Revolution.

But for the perennial academic scholar and Harvard Business School alumnus there couldn't have been a better timing to venture into real estate. Today, after experiencing four "boom and bust" cycles in the Philippine economy, Century Properties re-

mains resilient with 3,000 employees, more than 40 projects to its name, over \$2 billion worth of assets under management, six excellence awards, and a thriving full-service real estate business that includes property development, marketing and property management.

But more than these achievements, Antonio is proud to have introduced real estate innovations to Filipino home buyers, having pioneered the Fully-Fitted, Fully-Furnished and Fully-Serviced concept (in four of his current projects) and the first transportation-oriented residential condo.

Antonio marks another "first" by being the first Filipino real estate



ENRIQUE RAZON

entrepreneur to build a project in Manhattan, New York—The Centurion. The luxury residential building will be designed by the legendary architect I.M. Pei in French limestone and will rise on Fifth Avenue, in Manhattan's most important neighborhood called the Plaza District.

He says: "The key to real estate is not just location, location, location but al-

so timing, timing and perfect timing. Take action. To be a winner in life, find a rising trend, be a doer and not a passive onlooker."

As special envoy of the Philippines to China, Antonio is also proud to have brought several investments into the country, and is now at the forefront of the nonprofit investment advocacy organization called the Philippine-China Business Council.

Enrique K. Razon Jr.

Another Filipino entrepreneur who has gone global, the chairman and president of the International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) heads the largest corporation in the country that provides container port terminal services in Manila, Subic, Batangas, General Santos City, Poland and Brazil.

This year, Razon's company signed multimillion agreements with three major foreign ports to further expand

its international program. ICTSI also recently secured a 20-year contract to put up a \$180-million multi-user container terminal at the Port of Buenaventura in Colombia.

At 47, Razon is already the chair of Razon Industries Inc. and Sureste Properties Inc. He is a director of A. Soriano Corp., Cebu International Container Terminal Inc., Subic Bay International Terminal Holdings Inc., Subic Bay International Terminal Corp. and several other firms.

Rounding up the list are Amb. Jesus Tambunting, chairman and CEO of the leading Planters Development Bank (Plantersbank) for small and medium enterprises; Fred Ramos, son of National Bookstore's Socorro Ramos, whose Atlas Consolidated is gearing up to reclaim its role as one of the biggest exporters of copper and nickel; and Salvador Zamora, whose firm Rio Tuba is one of the country's largest exporters of nickel.

JOSE ANTONIO
RUDY ESPERAS



Going beyond bananas

From page B2-1



TONYBOY Florendo in a huddle with his father, "Banana King" Antonio Florendo Sr.

"I consider him a mentor," Tonyboy said. "I consult him on any move that I make and on no charge."

The second of six children said he looks up to Ongpin not only because of his sharp mind and keen business acumen but also because it was Ongpin who introduced the Florendos to the Chiquita group in 1969, paving the way for the family's entry into the

banana growing industry for which the group will eventually be known for.

The Anflo group grabbed at the opportunity to shift to another crop at that time because Tadeo was losing out market share for its abaca to oil-based nylon ropes. It needed to go into another business and the answer was in bananas.

The relationship with the Chiquita group lasted from 1969 until

1992 when Anflo started supplying to Del Monte.

Tadeo today is the single biggest producer of fresh Cavendish bananas in the Philippines with over 6,500 hectares of property dedicated to the science and art of producing world-class bananas that pass the stringent requirements of the global market.

About 20 million boxes a year of bananas under the Del Monte brand reach markets such as Japan, China, Hong Kong, Korea, Russia, Singapore, New Zealand and the Middle East.

Tonyboy credits the feat largely to his father—known as the "Banana King"—who "made something out of nothing."

"He was actually a mining engineer by profession but he got into business because he had great people skills and always had a pioneering spirit," Tonyboy said, "and being Ilocano, he was good with money. I think it also had a lot to do with luck and a lot of hard work."

Tonyboy said his father instilled in him the value of putting in an honest day's work as early as high school when he was ordered to work part-time as a mechanic.

"In my first two years of high school, I would go to the shop on Saturdays from 7:30 a.m. to 5 in the afternoon. I was paid P7 a week, which was good money in those days," he said. "In my third and fourth years, I worked in the spare parts section."

Tonyboy said he used to complain about having to go to work when his friends were out having fun on weekends. It also did not help that his father was a strict disciplinarian whose word was law in the house.

But he realizes now that his father was teaching him valuable lessons, not the least of which is to deal honestly with all kinds of people, especially the ordinary workers.

"My father always tells me to be straightforward and honest, especially with the workers, because we are all equals," he said, "that is why my father is proud to say that he can look anybody in the eye because he is honest."

Tonyboy learned more from his father when he started working for the company full-time in 1975 when he got home from Boston University and he tried to apply the same value of honesty.

The tall, fashionable and charismatic Tonyboy likewise picked up his father's innate ability to deal with all kinds of people, making him a natural to become a politician.

His gift for gab definitely came in handy when he was wooing Margarita Moran, who was crowned Miss Universe in 1973, whom he would eventually marry despite his parents' objections.

"They did not talk to me for months after that and even cut me off for a while," revealed Tonyboy, who said he eloped with his Miss Universe when he was 23 and Margie, 21.

But it did not take long for Antonio Sr. and Nenita to come around, especially with the birth of their grandchildren—Monica Danielle in 1986 and Gabrielle Antoinette in 1990.

They were family, after all and Antonio Sr. still had much to teach his heir apparent.

There's the proverbial Ilocano work ethic and discipline with money that Antonio Sr. made sure to pass on to his children.

"We have always been conservative in our financial dealings. We do not borrow heavily," Tonyboy

said, "that is one reason why we were not too affected by the Asian currency crisis because whatever dollar borrowings we had we were able to pay before the crisis struck."

Thus while other companies hobbled under the weight of their debt burden, Anflo moved from strength to strength, growing the other product lines such as pineapples (Davao Agricultural Ventures Corp.), swine (Nenita farms), citrus fruits, coconut products and even thoroughbred horses (Nest-Farms Inc.).

Anflo is also still involved in automotive and has gone on to invest in transport and forwarding services, manufacturing and trading and tourism through the Pearl Farm Beach Resort and Malipano Island.

Tonyboy is confident that there are other businesses that the Anflo group can get into and he is looking into the possibility of venturing abroad.

As his father always says, there are opportunities out there, so do not close the doors on them.

He'll be glad to know that Tonyboy has no intention of starting now.

From McDonald's to Taba Taba

By Joselle Badilla and Rizalene Acac
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—WHEN EDUARDO Amigleo came home to the Philippines after working with McDonald's in San Francisco, United States for 22 years, he immediately knew what he wanted to do.

Amigleo says his heart always tells him to return to the Philippines and share what he learned and experienced in working in a fast food chain.

As soon as he arrived here, Amigleo teamed up with his batch mates from the Ateneo de Davao University—Davao transport king Ronald Bangayan, Alberto Dy and Reynaldo Coronel—to put up Taba Taba.

Taba Taba, a restaurant serving affordable "lutong bahay" dishes, rose at the corner of Mt. Apo St. here on Oct. 13. The name means fat in English and was chosen because of the Filipinos love for fatty foods.

"We have 15 employees here. This is a small restaurant but we trained the employees to give fast service. Here, food will be served in 3-4 minutes to the customers,"



NIGHT diners in Taba Taba

PHOTOS BY JOSELLE BADILLA/INQUIRER MINDANAO



EDUARDO Amigleo

Amigleo tells the INQUIRER.

He says customers should experience food satisfaction and should get their money's worth with the help of food attendants, who get the orders correctly.

"I've had many experiences about food attendants not listening to what the customer is ordering. *Hindi nagko-concentrate. Yung order na isusulat iba sa sinasabi ng customers*," he says.

Amigleo says his experience as a store manager of McDonald's in San Francisco helped a lot in running the restaurant.

"The McDonald's store I managed got 13 awards for being an outstanding store. In opening our own small restaurant, it's just passing on the secret and the secret is eye to eye contact and to listen to what the customer is saying," he says.

Amigleo says the style of training he got from his former employer was what he was

trying to implement in the business he opened here.

Today, the bulk of customers come around lunch and dinner.

"*Madaming students who order takeout. Pag pasok ng dinner around 6:30 p.m. meron naman mga employees*," he says.

Amigleo says people would often ask them why food is cheap despite its good quality.

"*Lutong bahay lahat, kung ano ang luto ng parents natin, yon ang gingagawa namin dito. Masarap at quality food. Even our dinuguan, liempo*," he says.

After catering to students and other "up-scale" clients, Amigleo is now training his eyes on taxi drivers.

"We will soon open a canteen for the drivers, still the same *lutong bahay* at a cheaper price," Amigleo says.

He says the opening of a canteen for taxi drivers was prompted by observations that they were more keen on eating in a place where they feel at ease.

"*Dati sa opening ng Taba Taba, sila din mga customers namin. Pero syempre nahihiya na yan kumain dito. They eat more enjoyably at the company of their fellow drivers, mahabang kwentuhan yan sila. Mas masaya sila pag nasa canteen*," he says.

Taba Taba's house specialty is *humba* sold for P45; chicken gizzard and chicken liver at P15; pork BBQ/longganisa at P20; kilawin tenga, P50; kilawin kambing, P60; kalderetang kambing, P65. They also have breakfast meal as low as P35; hot cup of brewed coffee, P45; Espresso, P50 and Cappuccino, P60.



TABA TABA restaurant and its tabagrill

Roasters has new look

KENNY ROGERS ROASTERS recently renovated its SM Megamall branch with a new look aimed at making customers feel at home.

The 200-seater branch at the ground level of SM-Megamall A features earth tones, lime and olive green accents, stone-finished tables and brightly lit countertops. Large mirrors suggest a feeling of spaciousness while new drop light fixtures give the place a modern and contemporary feel. There is a couch in the caramel-and-

cream themed Kenny's Café and cushioned booths and all-wood picnic tables. A VIP section with bigger tables and cushioned benches is also available for those who want to dine in a more relaxed pace.

There are giant backlit posters of Kenny's mouth-watering dishes such as the Classic Roast Chicken, Honey Bourbon Ribs, fresh salads, pastas, side dishes, muffins and sandwiches.

For delivery services, dial 533-8888.



Deposit Amount	Interest Rates	
In Pesos	Less than 1 Year	1 Year
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500,000 - 999,999	3.75	3.75
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L-R: Oca Sanes, Nette R., Gigi Virata, and Roma Quilban of BPA/P



L-R: Jeff Madros of PLDT, Jim Evans, Paul, and Kit Egger of Telus Ambergis International



Takashi Togawa of Info Weapons Corporation



L-R: Liza Liza, Abel Dizon, and Roy Castañeda of PLDT



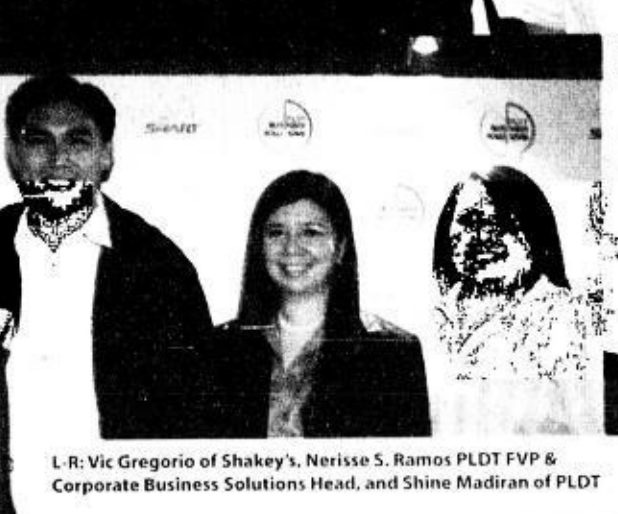
Peter Labrie of BNP Paribas



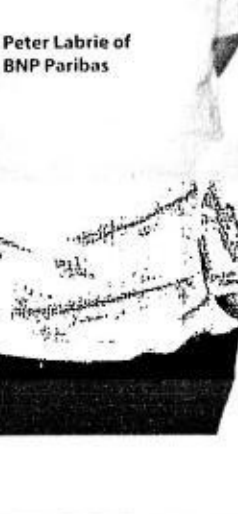
Romy Cambaliza of AIG



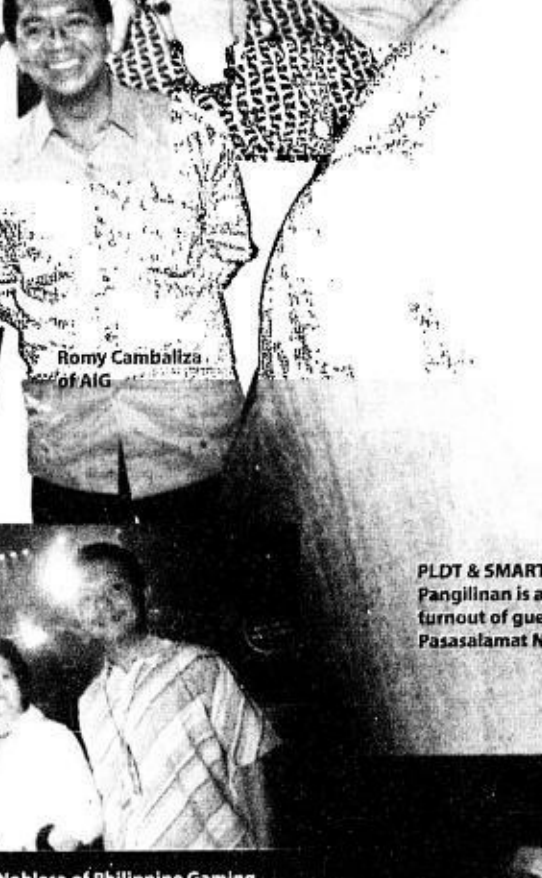
L-R: Jan and Gina Campos of Inter Pacific Transit Inc.



L-R: Vic Gregorio of Shakey's, Nerisse S. Ramos PLDT FVP & Corporate Business Solutions Head, and Shine Madiran of PLDT



HSBC Team (L-R): Toto Magsusi, Glenn Castor, Arnold Arcillas, Jonathan Garcia and Alfie Deato



L-R: Au Noblesa of Philippine Gaming Corp. and Tavs de la Cruz of Pilipinas Makro



PLDT & SMART Chairman Manuel V. Pangilinan is all smiles with the great turnout of guests for this year's Pasasalamat Night.



Edmond Lazo of HTMT



Ambassador del Rosario, PLDT Board



L-R: Gina Capistrano, Mark P. Gilroy, and Mike Pilgram of First Pacific Company Limited



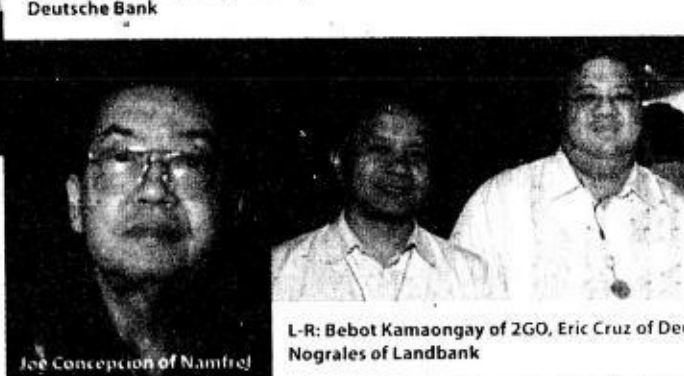
L-R: Brett Medel of PRULIFE, Marc Cruz of Innodata, Ferdie Cruz of Pfizer, Willy Tolentino of CDO, Larry Llamson, Robert Martinez and Earl Ferrer of DHL and Deutsche Bank



Jason Cayo of Harte-Hanks



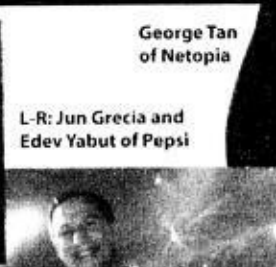
L-R: Rozlan Mohammed, Dina Chavez, Hafinith Mohammed, Poon Ah Koon, Koon Wei kein and Hoang Cuong of Acasia



L-R: Bebot Kamaongay of ZGO, Eric Cruz of Deutsche Nograles of Landbank



L-R: Jun Grecia and Edev Yabut of Pepsi



George Tan of Netopia



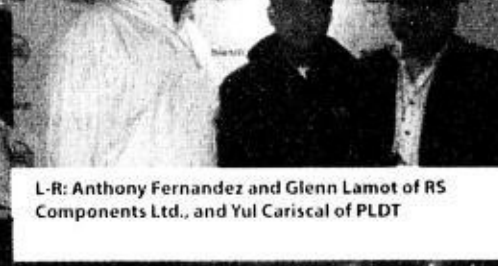
L-R: Heloz, Raghavai and Richard Mayer of Wacker



L-R: Riza Vaya, Koh Mun Kiat, Jansen & Jansen, Nerissa S. Ramos PLDT FVP & Corporate Business Solutions Head, and Fritz Segovia of WWWE



L-R: Jig Pedro, Nimba Dumpu, and Richard Cohen of Semicon



L-R: Robert Coyuto of PGA Cars and Eric R. Alberto, PLDT SVP & Head of Corporate Business Group



L-R: Anthony Fernandez and Glenn Lamot of RS Components Ltd., and Yul Cariscal of PLDT



L-R: Jenny Le Teuff, Maria Alvarez, Cristalle Lemaradur and Ricki Quebral of the Embassy of France, and Arnel Pelegrin of UCPB



Rissa Goloso of PLDT



L-R: George Yap, Margie San Juan, Nanette Vigulla and Leslie Javier of Chinabank



L-R: Mitch Locsin of BPA, P. Gilbert Zerrudo of Quisumbing Torres, and Miguel Garcia of DTSI



Donald Feldbaum of Optel



L-R: Jose Fernandez of Rivera Gold, Jojo Mendolia of SM, Chu Bautista of Standard Chartered, Cesar M. Enriquez PLDT FVP & Corporate Business Operations Officer, Mike Aguillar of Standard Chartered



L-R: Jun Tacneng of PLDT and Edwin Loran of NGL Consulting



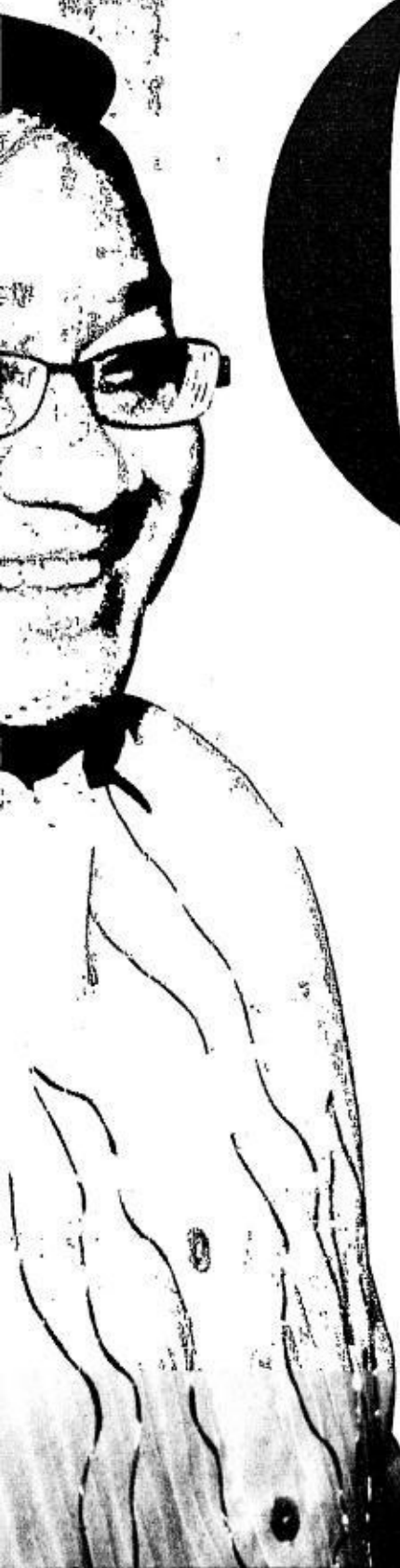
L-R: Jovy Hernandez of PLDT and Jose Cuisia of Philam Life



L-R: Eric R. Alberto, PLDT Corporate Business Group, and Chua of Chinabank



L-R: First Alb He Bu Pet Gu Ass



GLITZ, groove & GRATITUDE PLDT Pasasalamat 07



L-R: Wilfred Sonkengpo of AIG, Melissa Vergel de Dios of PLDT, Gigette Velasco of Phil Equity Partners, Robby Go of UBS, Ricardo Puig of ATR Kimeng, and Leo Posadas of PLDT



In this particular night you could say there was only one place and event that beckoned as a defiant

stronghold for Manila's indomitable party spirit. It was, of course, PLDT's Pasasalamat Night '07 at the Fort's NBC Tent.

In the face of what turned out to be a rather unsettling event in Makati that day, PLDT partners and most valued customers trooped to the Tent to be trooped to Pasasalamat's characteristic all-out fete of flowing drinks and a mouth-watering spread as only renowned chef Billy King could whip

up to the hype of a genuine 80's bash with cover, hit performances of Gloria Gaynor, Kool and the Gang, and Earth Wind and Fire. There was an unmistakable festive care-free attitude in the air; you could close

your eyes and the world indeed felt happier, younger. More than 2,000 guests joined in the collective hurrah.

There was no mistaking it—Pasasalamat partyers tonight were looking for some serious unwinding and relief; walls came down as new friendships were forged.

They certainly got it in the glamorous Pasasalamat '07, now a traditional yearly affirmation of solidarity and partnership between PLDT and its valued clients across various business sectors. After earth-shaking performances by Silk Band and more modern hip numbers by sultry Mocha, one lucky winner took home the keys of a brand new Hyundai Tucson.

Ask anyone who was there, they'll tell you it was a perfect night of grinds, bumps, and high-fives in an unmistakable festive care-free celebration of closer relationships and thanksgiving.



Cruz of Levis, Leo Martin Cuan of



che Bank, and Jose



, and Dawn Feliciano of Business Corporation, and Larry Uamson of DHL



and William and Romeo Ranjo



VIP & Head of and Rick



Josie Gotohio of Guarantee Life Insurance Co., Eric R. Alberto PLDT SVP & Head of Corporate Business Group and Jay Coyiuto of First Guarantee Life Insurance Co.



L-R: Jimmy Jimenez of GMA 7, Girlie Garcia of PLDT, and Marlon Mazaol of GMA 7



L-R: Mari Javier of PLDT, Jojo Mendiola of SM, Kat Luna-Abelarde and Luigi Lopa of PLDT



L-R: Elaine Tram, Daniel Nishikawa, Alex Galano and Macy Reyes of JP Med



L-R: Jun & Joanna Dy of Bankcard



L-R: Mitch Locsin of BPA/P, Ed Doctolero of Avaya, Eric R. Alberto, PLDT SVP & Head of Corporate Business Group, Vic Andaya of ACS, Nilo Cruz of British Telecom, Johnny Garcia of e-Scriber Inc., Jojo Ulligan of CCAP, and Raffi David of Pilipinas Teleserv.

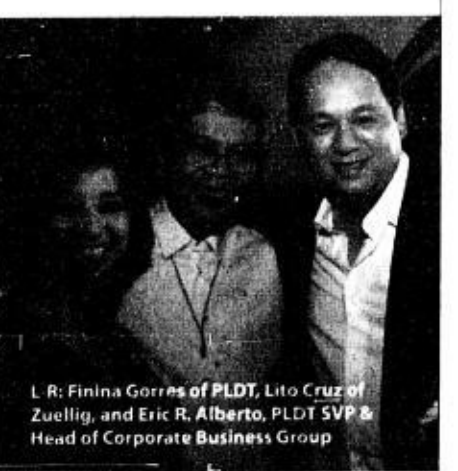


Klaas Orieel of Alcatel

MVP (2nd from Left) with Cypress Team: Bong Leal, Johnny Matulac, Roel De Sagun, Lito Estacio, and Lito Balanac



L-R: Mon Isberto, Dan Ibarra and Jay Lagdameo of PLDT



L-R: Finina Gorres of PLDT, Lito Cruz of Zuellig, and Eric R. Alberto, PLDT SVP & Head of Corporate Business Group



Rex Mangalindan of The Provincial Government of Bulacan



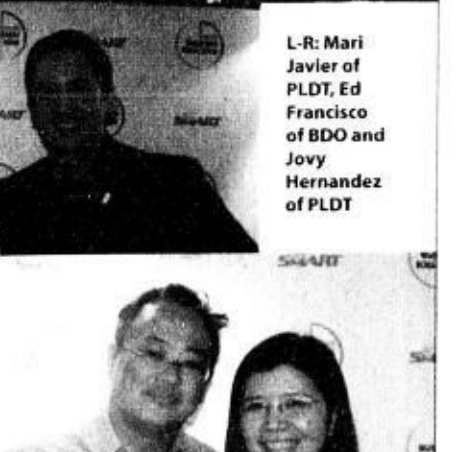
L-R: Jane Calalang of PLDT, Bernard Go of Contract Design, and Michael Tan of Asia Brewery



Atty. Felipe Gozum of GMA 7



L-R: JB de la Cruz of PLDT and Mike Nicholas of Unilever



L-R: Mari Javier of PLDT, Ed Francisco of BDO and Jovy Hernandez of PLDT



Jobit Mata of Amkor Anam, and Nerissa S. Ramos PLDT EVP & Corporate Business Solutions Head

Borderless World

The Medical City pursues leadership in global healthcare

By Marlet D. Salazar

As The Medical City (TMC) celebrates 40 years of leadership in the health sector, they pay tribute to the past, acknowledging that the last four decades have shaped what TMC stands for today and more importantly, what TMC will stand for tomorrow.

Initially known as ABM Sison Hospital in honor of its first medical director, Angerico B.M. Sison, it opened with 93 beds in 1967. It adopted the name The Medical City six years later. The new name signaled renewed commitment to constantly raising the bar in delivering quality health care.

In its previous site in Mandaluyong, TMC expanded its facilities and established its track record over time. Its new facility at Meralco Compound in Ortigas now positions the hospital to assume leadership in the health sector. Its president and CEO, Dr. Alfredo Bengzon, envisioned this new location and the associated modernization as far back in 1996. By 2004, the vision became a reality.

Patients as partners

"As we prepared to move to our new

able for people to look after their health; not just a place to go to when they are already sick. TMC is thus a strong advocate of health promotion and disease prevention.

With these principles in mind, the center holds regular fora on health education and information, including those that relate to various lifestyle diseases such as diabetes, cancer, hypertension, and obesity. It is in these areas that the patient partnership proposition and value of prevention vs. treatment are even more important.

Flagship Programs

TMC has invested in state-of-the-art equipment and cutting edge technologies to establish Flagship Programs or centers of excellence in Wellness, Cardiovascular Services, Cancer

ceed the most exacting international benchmarks," said Dr. Augusto Sarmiento, chairman of the board of TMC.

JCIA was developed by international experts and address the organization's level of accomplishment in key functional areas, such as patient care, patient rights, facility safety and organizational governance. With JC's gold seal of approval, patients are assured of quality patient care at par with the best hospitals in the world.



TMC launches technological firsts

Technology plays an important role in TMC's quest for leadership. During its week-long 40th anniversary celebration, TMC launched four major projects that will revolutionize patient care and customer service as we know it. The Medical Information Documentation and Automation System, otherwise known as MIDAS is a technology that enables doctors to access their patients' records in digital form through the



Care, Neurosciences and Regenerative Medicine.

Currently, TMC's 15-storey Nursing Tower already has 500 beds, while the second tower can be built-out for 300 more. These Nursing Towers are connected by a Podium and bridgways making it a patient- and environment-friendly medical facility. Overlooking the Pasig and Antipolo skyline, the 18 floors of the Medical Arts Tower house 280 doctors' clinics.

Bringing its services right to the patients' communities are TMC's seven satellite clinics that deliver a full range of diagnostic and therapeutic services on an outpatient basis.

World-class healthcare

TMC has recently been awarded accreditation by the Joint Commission International Accreditation (JCIA), the most prestigious accrediting body for international healthcare organizations. Not only did TMC achieve the accreditation with flying colors, they also received perfect scores in standards related to access to care, continuity of care, quality improvement, and patient safety.

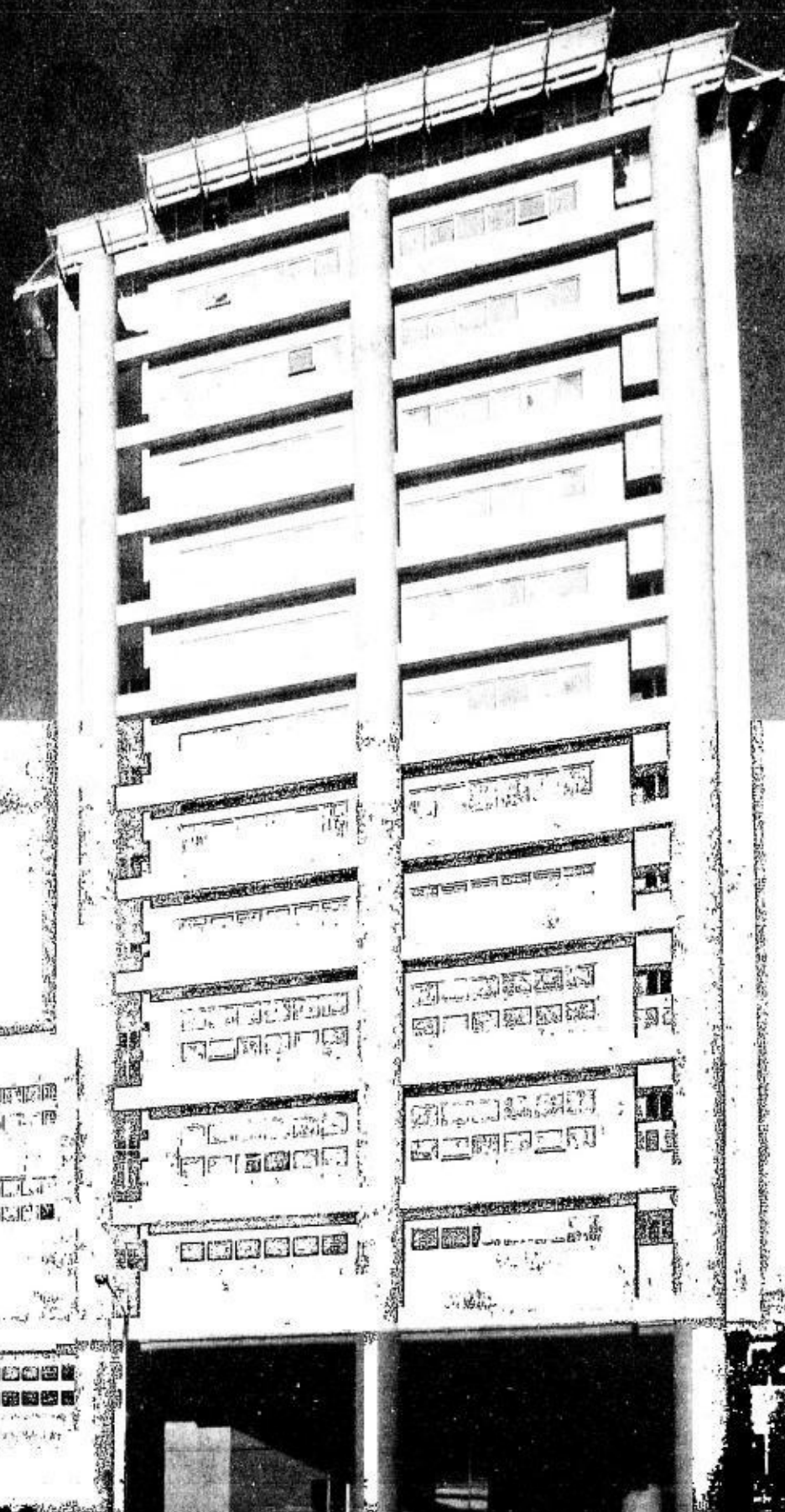
"JCIA accreditation serves as external validation that we meet and even ex-

home, we instituted wide-ranging organizational transformation in preparation for achieving higher growth trajectories going forward," said Dr. Alfredo Bengzon, president and CEO of TMC.

The Medical City puts forward a new innovative paradigm in delivering health service - that of the patient as a partner. In TMC, patients are empowered to make decisions and take action with regards to their health. The medical practitioner acts as an educator, guide, consultant, and yes, a friend as the patient pursues personal goals in health and wellness.

To operationalize this patient partnership philosophy, TMC has established the Center for Patient Partnership headed by Dr. Florianne Valdes. "When we speak about our mission of putting the patient on center stage, we are really talking about enabling our patients to become active partners in the management of their health," Valdes said. "It's not only about education. It's about empowering patients and engagement. It's a venue that pro-

The transfer to the new home marks the strengthening of its commitment to provide better healthcare to the Filipino people and the empowering of patients.



Borderless World

The Medical City pursues leadership in global healthcare

By Rina Reyes

At the very heart of the Medical City's vision is a commitment to global healthcare leadership. The Medical City, a leading healthcare provider in the Philippines, is now expanding its reach to other parts of the world. The Medical City's vision is to become a global healthcare leader, providing quality healthcare services to people in different parts of the world. The Medical City's vision is to become a global healthcare leader, providing quality healthcare services to people in different parts of the world. The Medical City's vision is to become a global healthcare leader, providing quality healthcare services to people in different parts of the world.

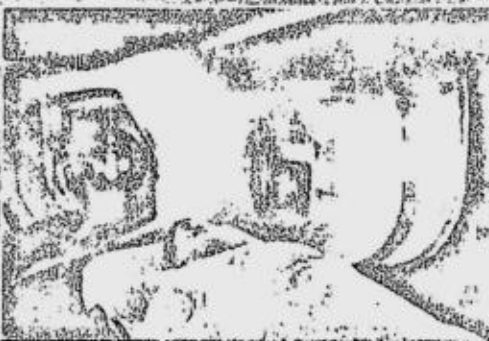
Patients as partners

At the Medical City, patients are not just recipients of care, but active partners in their healthcare journey.

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Ramp up programs

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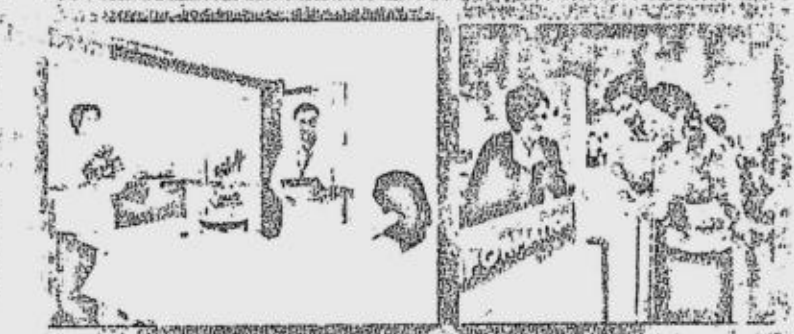
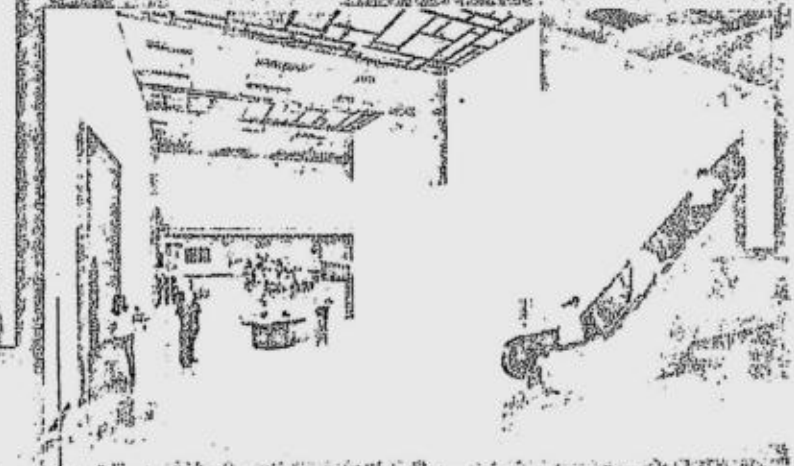


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High-tech healthcare

The Medical City is using high-tech healthcare to provide quality healthcare services to people in different parts of the world. The Medical City is using high-tech healthcare to provide quality healthcare services to people in different parts of the world. The Medical City is using high-tech healthcare to provide quality healthcare services to people in different parts of the world.



The transfer to the new home marks the strengthening of its commitment to provide better healthcare to the Filipino people and the empowering of patients.



Medical City ...

web. The Partner Card allows patients to rack up redeemable loyalty points whenever they use TMC's services. The Barcoding Project promotes patient safety and efficiency in diagnosis and medication using bar coded patient bracelets. Finally, TMC's new website, asktmc.com, is the first interactive health care website, where patients can actually consult with a doctor, schedule an appointment, test or procedure, and reserve a room -all with a click of a button on-line.

After 40 years, TMC remains at the forefront, always ready to set the trend and lead the pack, creating new markets not just in the Philippine arena but in the global market as well.

"We are well-positioned to take such bold action," said Dr. Bengzon. "With our robust network of facilities, our capable and committed organization, our innovative services, our solid and substantial financial foundation, and our prestigious international accreditation, we can proudly claim to be The Capital of Health, the center of all that

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For its world-class standards in patient care,



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In its evaluation, the JCI awarded The Medical City PERFECT SCORES in Access to Care, Continuity of Care, Quality Improvement and Patient Safety.

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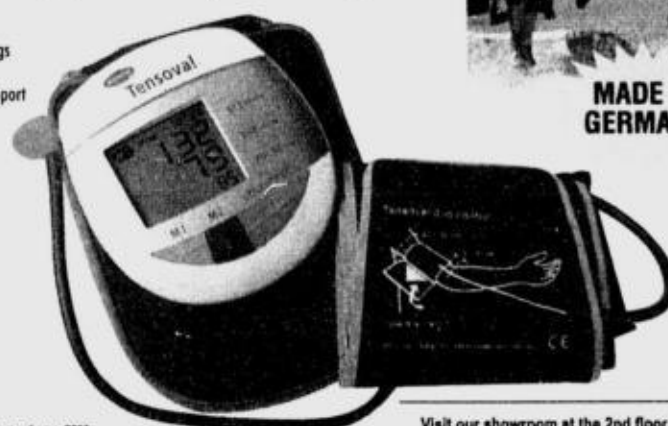
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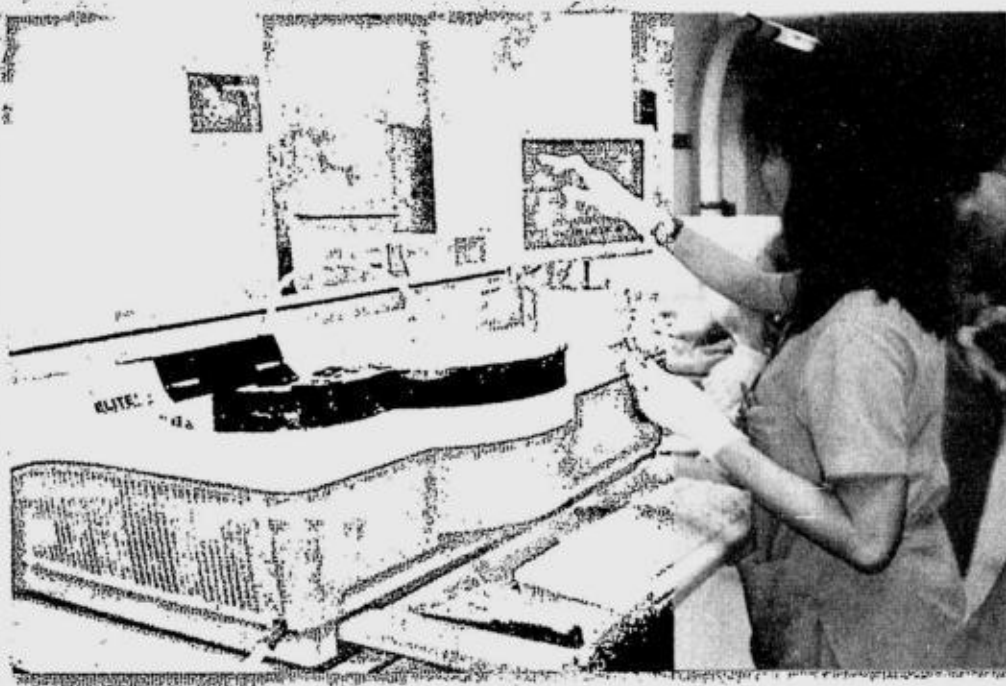
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Sunday BIZ

Winter wonderland in BSP

By Doris C. Dumlao

THERE'S A NEW TOURIST attraction in the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and it has nothing to do with money nor banking.

It has something to do with Christmas and the effervescent Monetary Board member Nelly Favis-Villafuerte's office decoration at the "MB" row at the BSP's fifth floor.

A former exporter and trade undersecretary, Villafuerte transformed her office into a winter wonderland—but using indigenous Filipino handicrafts made for export



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to western countries. The result never fails to wow visitors.

It was the first time since Villafuerte took her oath of office as a Monetary Board member in July 2005 that she decided to do some serious Yuletide decorating—challenged by the stunning sapphire Christmas motif adopted by her next-door neighbor, BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo, whose office was among the first to be spruced up (by devoted wife Apple) for the upcoming holidays. It was also the first time that the central bank community has seen such an elaborate Christmas display in an office setting.

With the help of her daughters and staff, Villafuerte fixed her office for the whole of two days. (She even changed some of the furnishing to match the White Christmas theme). And when Guinigundo saw his neighbor's office Christmas makeover, he said in jest: "I need to add more decor to my office."

The word about Villafuerte's Christmas interior easily spread across BSP, drawing curious onlookers. BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. and BSP Deputy Governor Nestor Espenilla Jr. also took time to view the office, both complimenting her work of art.

"It's really winter wonderland," Tetangco says.

Villafuerte says she wanted to bring holiday cheers to the BSP staff and by embracing a "white" Christmas theme, send a message of "peace." Extremely proud of her creation, she has since then declared an "open house," welcoming everyone from the top to bottom of the organization.

She, of course, dipped into her own pockets and got good bargains from two exporter-suppliers, from whom she also sourced some decor materials for her own household. Thus her office is now a showroom for Philippine-made white Christmas décor—with over a dozen white Christmas trees of various sizes, boughs laden with white blossoms, snowmen and cute sheep (her personal favorite). Right on her doorstep, two snowmen—one big and one small—stand guard.

The highlight of the showcase is the setting at Villafuerte's working area which is as pretty as a wedding backdrop. This valedictorian of the University of the Philippines' College of Law Class '59 and 7th placer in the 1959 bar exams is a runaway winner for office Christmas interior for 2007.



MONETARY Board member Nelly F. Villafuerte



WHITE Christmas trees of various sizes

A Bangko Sentral executive turns her office into a showroom for RP-made white Christmas décor



SNOWMEN and sheep stand guard

IN THIS ISSUE

■ Noche Buena with a young twist /F1-F5

Sunday LIFESTYLE

Website: www.inquirer.net/lifestyle

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

sms feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) or email us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

IN THIS ISSUE

■ 'Tis the season of Nena Tantoco and Rustan's /G1

Playing Santa this Christmas

MY "CELEBRITY DUETS" P1-million prize money was right before my eyes last week and I was staring at the check for a mighty long time. What an incredible, three-month journey of music production, show-biz drama and, ultimately, most important of all, friendship!

The check was turned over at the office of GMA SVP for entertainment Wilma Galvante.

While there, we also got to discuss the ongoing squabble between my fellow contestant Jessica Bunevacz and her partners at Beverly Hills 6750. My only add to the entire brouhaha is that I sincerely hope that their partnership problems are all ironed out soon.

As my prize was totally pledged to charity, GMA EVP

Darling de Jesus was able to arrange for the prize to be tax-free so that each charity could receive the full amount.

All my Assumption Batch '81 classmates led by Popsie Gamboa went to White Cross, our first charity. There we distributed the first P100,000 worth of rice, noodles, canned goods, diapers, soap and toys. The center's little orphans were my guests during one of the episodes of the show and it was great to see them all again.

Generous grand dames Marivic Concepcion and Connie Lopez were there to witness the handover, replete with Jollibee meals for over a hundred kids. It is heartwarming to know that they have been successfully placing the children into decent homes here and abroad.

I found out from White Cross



TESSA!
Tessa Prieto-Valdes

director Mely Vargas that even single, Filipinos can now adopt a child.

White Cross relies on local

I just got my P1 million check for winning 'Celebrity Duets' and I have started distributing the money to my favorite charities

funding and generous benefactors. I remember my grandmother, Remedios Rufino, and her sister-in-law Elvira, and also involved with White Cross, which is now 71 years old! A more current example is Reyes Haircutters' Les Reyes, who provides quarterly grooming services to the orphans.

Festival of Trees

In our own little ways, we should all find ways to give back. The Makati Garden Club and Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) always host the Festival of Trees, the longest-running charity auction dinner in our country, now in its 12th year.

This year's festival was noteworthy, as Sen. Antonio Trillanes held his own version of a brouhaha at The Manila Peninsula on the same day. Whether one is pro or anti, the sad thing is that a curfew was imposed that evening and so the party had to end early to make sure that all guests could get home by Cin-



SEA PRINCESS with the happy White Cross kids

derella hour.

I was not dressed like Cinderella but more like a Christmas tree since the festival auctioned off fully adorned Christmas trees. The raised funds support various poverty alleviation and environmental programs of the PBSP. One example is PLDT-Smart Foundation's Amore Community Development Program in Albay, which is still heavily involved in rehabilitating victims from Typhoon Reming.

Environment advocacy

There are many examples of businessmen who move off the corporate ladder and devote

their careers to giving back. My brother-in-law, David Valdes, recently took the Tony Meloto path, leaving this newspaper to be the president of WWF Philippines. He now calls me to contribute my time to host their events.

WWF Philippines recently honored its corporate partners who have committed themselves to business practices that help the global environment.

La Farge, the cement company, uses a rice hull burner to power its operations to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

WWF offers planning assis-

PLAYING/C2



P1-MILLION check from GMA's Wilma Galvante and Darling de Jesus with Annika and Athena Valdes



WHITE Cross grand ladies Connie Lopez, Marivic Concepcion and Mely Vargas with Batch '81 girls Popsie Gamboa, Sea Princess, Lorvi Mapa, Nana Sham, Girlie Sison, Jojo Ongsiako and Claudette Cordon and Marlon Garcia

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JEWELRY designer Manny Capulla and Jes Tan-Gan



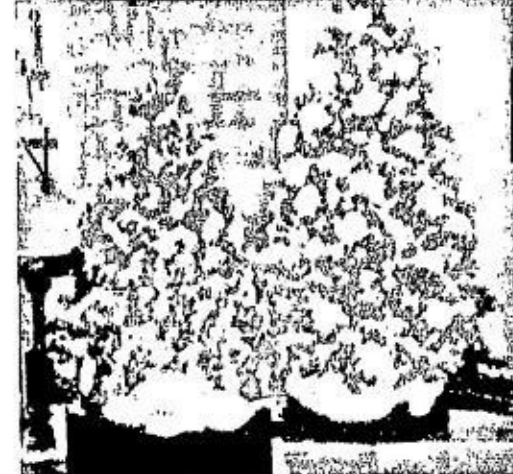
WWF vice chair Lory Tan presents key points of WWF Coral Triangle Initiative.



THE RECEPTION Committee led by WWF president Dave Valdes (second from left)



PBSP, Smart Communications Inc. and PLDT-SFI chair Manuel V. Pangilinan; PBSP trustee and Makati Garden Club president Maria Luisa Perez-Rubio; Manila Polo Club president Isabel Caro-Wilson; and Philamlife president Jose Cuisia Jr.



A LITTLE Bit Country and Her Majesty are among the gorgeous Christmas trees created by Perez-Rubio.



BRITISH ambassador's wife Jill Beckett and PLDT-Smart Foundation head Anthony Pangilinan



CEBU designer Arcy Gayatin and Thelma Sioson-San Juan



L MANILA designer Tippi Ocampo and husband Ito



KNITS queen Lulu Tan-Gan and Sevrine Mialhe

From page C1

tance to companies that want to reduce their power costs or their "carbon footprint," the latest green buzzword.

For example, Ayala Land is making sure its Anvaya Project in Bataan has minimal impact on the environment. One project that appeals to me, since I scuba dive, is their adjusting their beach-front lighting so that nesting sea turtles are not disturbed.

Another WWF partner, Petron, is contributing to the conservation of Tubbataha Marine Park in the middle of the Sulu Sea. For a list of projects, call 9207923; e-mail dvaldes@wwf.org.ph; or visit www.wwf.org.ph.

Lulu's locus

One event that was postponed by the Trillanes tempest in a teacup was the launch party of L Manila.

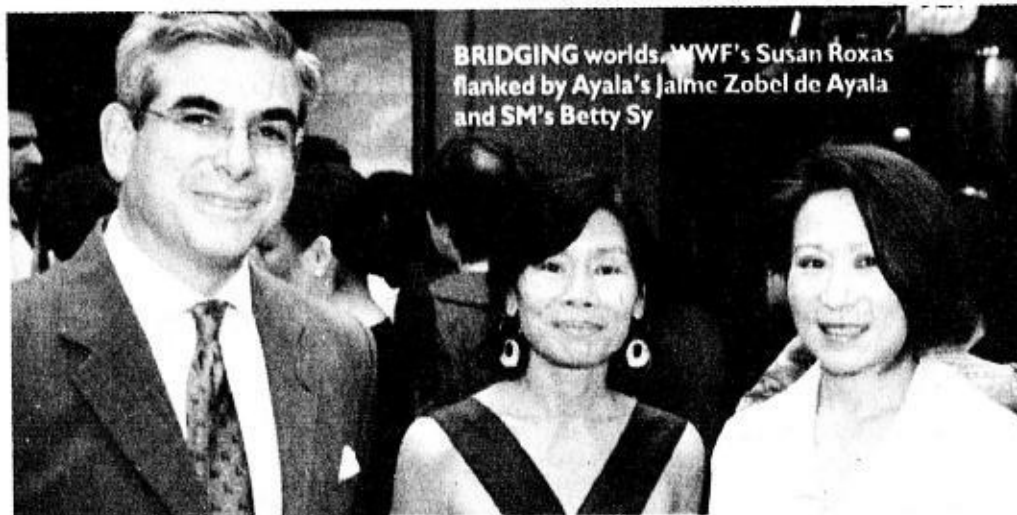
Lulu Tan Gan's new shop at Greenbelt 5 finally did have its opening last week. The shop is packed with her creative de-

signs as well as that of other young designers. The result is an interesting mix of merchandise, including jewelry by one of my favorite designers, Manny Capulla.

Among Lulu's GB 5 neighbors are the fashion shops of several young local fashion designers, like Kate Torralba, Vic Barba, and Jun Escario.

And also in the complex is Pia y Damaso, a stylishly elegant, Filipino-fusion Restaurant

BRIDGING worlds: WWF's Susan Roxas flanked by Ayala's Jaime Zobel de Ayala and SM's Betty Sy



LOVELY Luli Delgado and Ambassador Albert del Rosario



ULTRA-GENEROUS White Cross supporters Les Reyes, Popsie Gamboa, Marivic Concepcion, designer Oliver Tolentino and Mely Vargas

owned by creative duo Ricky Toledo and Chito Vijandre. Both the food and the interiors are a feast for the palate and the eyes.

Coffee corner

Another GB 5 must see is Travel Café (TCP) Philippines. The swanky, organic-looking café is designed by Budji Layug and offers not just great cuisine and coffee but also serves as a travelers' gateway to the Philippines. Tourists no longer need to book vacations in cramped travel offices.

Attendees of the launch included celebrities, the diplomatic corps, media, government officials, and travel and tourism personalities.

Kicking off the event was the musical performance of "Celebrity Duets" judge Louie Ocampo, Jong Cuenco and the newly launched Ryan Cayabyab Singers. With legendary maestro Ryan Cayabyab as musical director, they performed timeless Philippine songs.

TCP is sure to be welcomed by food connoisseurs and travel aficionados. It offers a unique menu that reflects the indigenous flavors of traditional Filipino cuisine. The very first Travel Café Philippines opened in Iidibashi, Tokyo, on July 25, 2006.

Its success encouraged Tourism Secretary Joseph "Ace" Durano to expand TCP using franchisees to establish cafés in the Philippines and around the world. In many ways, Durano is also giving back in the form of government service. Congratulations to him on this fantastic innovation.

Christmas is truly a time to give. In the next few weeks, I hope to be able to give out all the checks for my "Celebrity Duets" charities. That way, so many more can have a truly Merry Christmas!

E-mail the author at seaprincess@inquirer.com.ph.



TOURISM Undersecretary Eduardo Jarque and Makati Skyline Inc.'s Raul Sunico



FASHION designer Patrice Ramos-Diaz



TCP PROJECT head Rosvi Gaetos and Ram Antonio



CARGO king Johnny Valdes



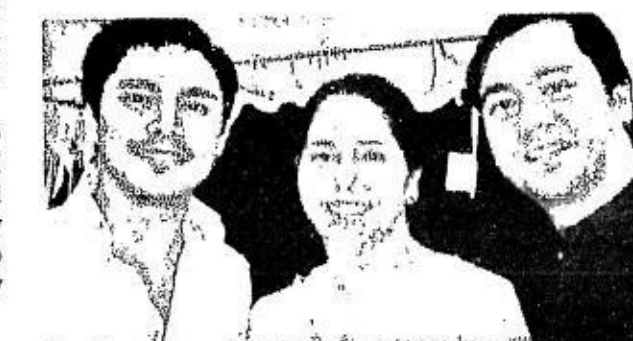
OISHI'S Shera Tiu and husband Jasper



FAMOUS PR Keren Pascual



PIA Y Damaso restaurant owners chef Bambi Sy Gobio and Ricky Toledo



JOHN and Yoko Restaurant owner Marvin Agustin, Angelette Calero and Anton Barretto



FESTIVAL of Trees ladies Lulu Rodriguez, Linda Angeles and Naty Papa



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EMILY'S POST

Emily Marcelo

Is husband pretending to be clueless?

DEAR EMILY,

I am a full-time home-maker and my husband works in one of the most prestigious companies in the country.

My problem is his woman subordinate who keeps updating my husband on her whereabouts and hitches a ride in his car almost on a daily basis.

A lot of women text or call my husband but the ones from this woman stand out!

Messages like "just arrived home," "am in the bank right now," "still working," "on my way to the office," "where will you eat lunch?" are received from her all the time.

When I asked my husband about this he said she was just hitching a ride and he was just being a good Samaritan. He said there was nothing going on between them and that their relationship was no more than that of a superior and his subordinate.

He even said she was nothing but a mere "gofer" in his office. According to him, he was also "puzzled" by her text messages.

I wanted to confront her but my husband said he would fix the problem himself. But things have not changed up to now. And it has been going on for three years already.

I want to face this situation/problem with dignity and decency but when your marriage and peace of mind are at stake you sometimes feel like you are losing control.

WIFE IN TROUBLE

I cannot blame you for being riled by this woman. What is puzzling is your husband's incredulity and "puzzlement" over the text messages he is getting from this supposed office "gofer."

If he were in the movies, he would be winning awards for

best improvisation or best actor for feigning ignorance. Three years is a ridiculously long time for him to try to "fix" something with someone he sees every day!

He is either the most generous office mate, the best confidante or the most dense person anyone can find.

Imagine accepting as benign a barrage of messages from someone who does not mean anything to him? You have known him for a long time—so, is he naturally gullible?

How has your marriage been anyway? Besides the annoying, incessant messages from this woman, has your husband's relationship with you changed in any way—physically and emotionally?

Did your sex life wane or improve these last three years?

Please spare yourself from the embarrassment of confronting the woman. It is humiliating, it is fishwife-y, and it should be beneath you.

It is your husband you should straighten out, not someone outside your marriage. It is he who should be affected by the actions of this "nothing" woman.

Talk to him again and let him walk his talk this time.

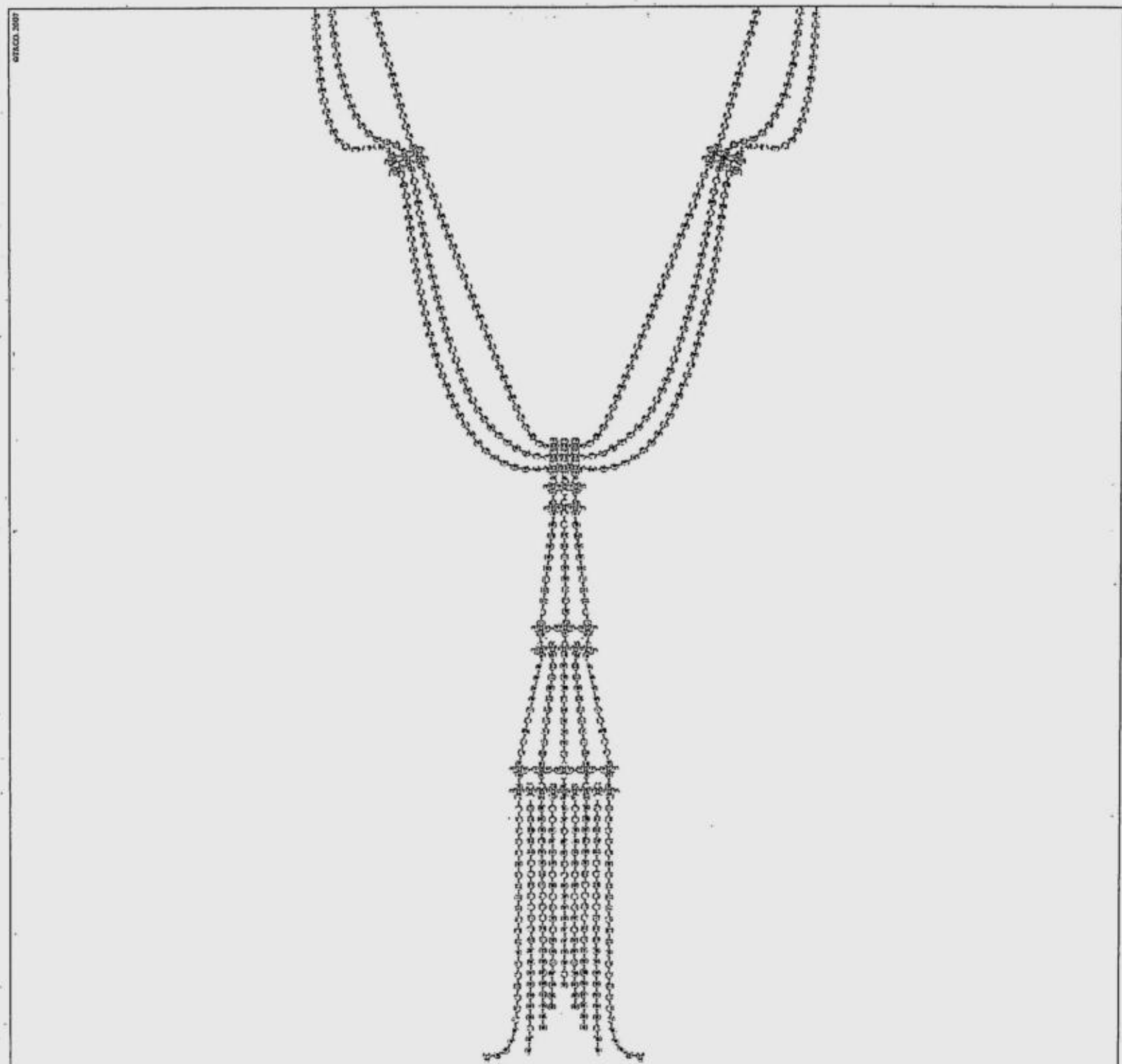
And if you can do something other than monitoring your husband's cell phone, do it! Being a homemaker is a wonderful profession. It is noble!

Make your husband realize that it is worth going home to you, welcoming and happy to see him after he had a hard day at the office.

E-mail the author at emarclo@inquirer.com.ph, Subject: Lifestyle, or send your letters to INQUIRER. Visit www.pbs.gov.ph and listen to Ms Marcelo co-host the program "Kalikasan Vigilante," 7:15-8:30 p.m., Monday-Friday, on dwBR 104.3 FM.

Sunday LIFESTYLE

He says he is puzzled by the text messages from a mere 'gofer' in his office updating him on her activities



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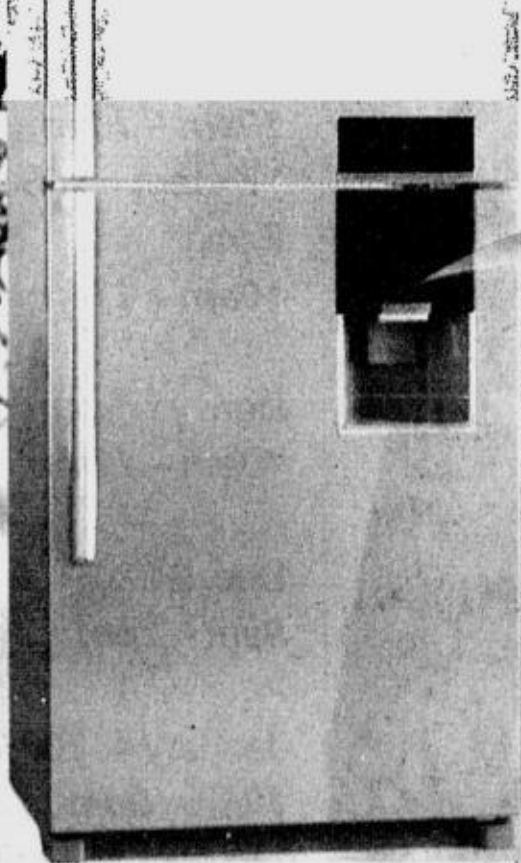
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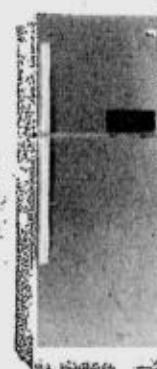
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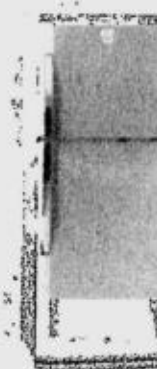
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you can shop, dine and have as much fun as you'd like!

If you want to take a short break from shopping, grab some refreshments or sit down for a meal at one of the numerous restaurants. There's a lot to choose from. Grab a light snack to go, sit down to a filling meal, or satisfy your sweet tooth with desserts, cakes and pastries. Whatever you're craving for, satisfy it here.

And to cap off your activities, feast your eyes on the most spectacular fireworks displays as they light up the night sky. With all these in store for you, we're sure you'd agree that the Grand Year-End sale is definitely the grandest way to welcome the new year!

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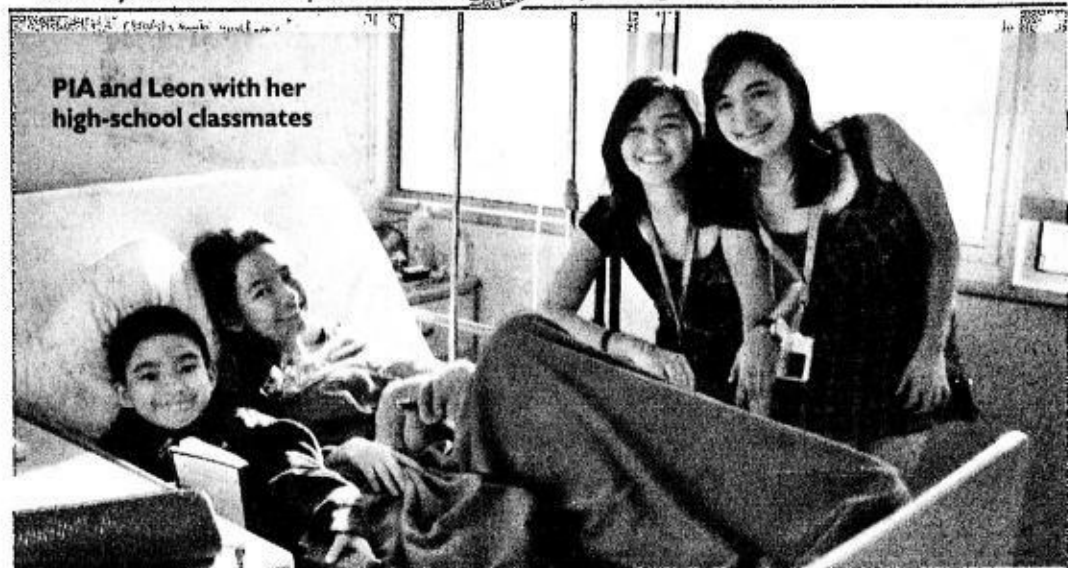
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Sunday LIFESTYLE

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PIA and Leon with her high-school classmates

ROOTS AND WINGS Cathy Babao-Guballa

A different home for the holidays

To be confined in the hospital during Christmas is a poignant, bittersweet experience

"I'LL BE HOME FOR Christmas."

Those lyrics to a classic, well-loved Christmas carol took on an entirely new meaning for me and my family this year. The Medical City briefly became our home because our daughter, Pia, came down with a very severe case of gastroenteritis. Her agony began late last week and took a turn for the worse on Monday morning. We rushed her to the E.R. at noon where she was promptly attended to and confined by 4 p.m.

Having a sick child is a parent's worst nightmare. Having to see your child go through major pain is like having a dagger stuck through your heart with every painful episode she has to go through.

And yet, because you are the parent, you need to be strong for your child. Parenting is both a rewarding and risky business. Yet I would not have it any other way.

It becomes even more terrible as you await the tests that will confirm what it is your child has. The waiting is always the most difficult part. I met with other parents who had sick children and, right away, bonds were formed—total strangers coming together immediately because of a shared experience.

There is always strength and comfort to be found in common experiences. Informal support groups among parents on the same boat is always such a huge blessing.

Poignant, bittersweet

To be confined in the hospital during the holiday season is a poignant, bittersweet experience. Christmas is a time when families are supposed to be together in their homes, and the thought of having to spend Christmas in the hospital is not a very comforting thought.

Yet, having spent time here also reinforces the desire to

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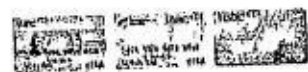
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Christmas catalog of hot consumer trends

GRAND BUFFET MEALS, select shopping vouchers, and personal electronics will continue to be hot consumer trends this holiday season and beyond, according to Tricia D. Ustare, product executive for loyalty and rewards at American Express.

Focused on pleasing affluent card members who earn at least P1 million a year, American Express' choices usually indicate trends that will eventually cover mainstream shoppers and buyers.

For now, the items enjoyed by affluent card members include dining vouchers to Circles Event Café at the Makati Shangri-La, Spiral at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza, a special package of red and white wine and wine accessories, and a Sony Playstation Portable.

The Membership Rewards Program is offered to card members to develop stronger loyalty and drive higher spending on the American Express Peso Platinum Credit Card. According to Grace D. Limjap, card marketing head, American Express has long used rewards that are attractive to

clients to further grow the business.

For this holiday season, the rewards choices are being offered to card members as gifts they can give away to loved ones in exchange for points. Thus, there are items for adults as well as children, men as well as women, highlighted in the catalogue.

What does the Peso Platinum Card holiday selection mean to ordinary consumers? Picked from stores and items frequently purchased by clients as indicated by their records, the favored restaurants indicate that offering a wide selection of premium dishes in one seating is the hot dining preference of the moment.

Spiral, for instance, offers five cuisine categories from Indian to Mediterranean to Japanese—each category offering around 10 dishes. While Mezzaluna, a signature restaurant at Serendra, does not offer buffets, it entices diners with samplings of turkey or lamb viands served in one dish.

The sampling is meant to awaken the diner to the many gastronomic possibilities offered by the bird.

The American Express Christmas catalog also indicates that the appreciation of fine

wine continues to engage its card members—and should also logically preoccupy the greater number of shoppers.

For 6,500 reward points, a card member can acquire a Rosendahl Bordeaux wine glass set of two. The wine glass which is made in Denmark is shaped so that the connoisseur can best appreciate the bouquet and other qualities of this French red wine.

Choices for children contained in the catalog include the popular Nintendo Wii, which encourages its players to go through the motions of swinging a tennis racket or other activity required by the game in play. Other hot items, according to American Express Peso Platinum card members, include a Sony PSP and a Game Boy Micro.

A fashion clothes steamer for 25,000 points for fastidious dressers, bed sheets with a luxurious 300 thread count and an apple juicer are other items keenly appreciated by the affluent.

In the spirit of Christmas, American Express Peso Platinum Credit Card also allows members to exchange reward points for cash donations to charities like Children's Hour, Ateneans Helping Ateneans, and DLSU Science Foundation, Inc.



AMERICAN Express' Membership Rewards Program is offered to card members to develop stronger card loyalty and higher spending.

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THE BLESSING
of friends. With
our pastors from
GCF and CCF



A different home . . .

From page D1

help those who are most in need during the season. Here at the hospital, they have tried to make the experience a bit more pleasant. In the lobby every afternoon, different children's choirs come to serenade the visitors in the hospital atrium. An element of hope and cheer fill the air.

In fact, the ambiance at The Medical City is not depressing or hospital-like at all. Everyone from the orderlies to the interns have a ready smile, and it isn't a put-on. And in spite of the constant exodus of nurses that most Philippine hospitals have had to deal with, the nurses here are very well trained, efficient, warm and pleasant.

To top it off, there is an ongoing toy drive for a children's foundation, and it warms the heart to see the toy boxes slowly fill up.

I've always had a love-hate relationship with hospitals. I dread having to go to one, whether for myself or for my children, but in the same breath, it is the place that has given me the most comfort at several crucial times in my life as a parent.

It is also there where I carry out my ministry and life's work. I consider it a huge blessing that our life as a family has been blessed with the best of doctors and medical practitioners.

If you want to do a good deed this Christmas, and teach your children about the true meaning and essence of Christmas, go and visit the pediatric wards of our government hospitals. There, you will see and experience for yourself firsthand how difficult life has become, and how hard it is to be in the hospital.

Share a bit of yourself—whether your time, talent or treasures—with those who need it the most.

Friendly staff

I would like to thank our pastors from Greenhills Christian Fellowship and everyone who

constantly visited and prayed for us, as well as our friends who checked on Pia. Also, her classmates who brought cheer just as she was about to feel down. Nothing like a group of 16-year-olds to brighten up a blue afternoon.

Thanks, too, to the friendly staff and all the wonderful nurses on the 10th floor of The Medical City for the great care that they extended my daughter.

My deepest appreciation to the pediatric residents who looked after her, and most especially to our lovely pediatrician, Dr. Joseph Regalado, who would visit us like clockwork at 5:45 a.m. each day, and who took care not only of Pia but also of her parents. Our family thanks all of you from the bottom of our hearts.

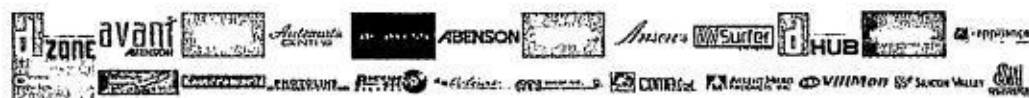
Everything gets put on hold when illness strikes. This Christmas has become especially meaningful for my family with this experience. Though it's very difficult at the start, it is a good reminder to us all about how the real essence of Christmas is not found in gifts, food or parties, but in God's constant faithfulness to us, and for this we are truly grateful.

Many times, especially at the start of my confinement, I guess, like any other parent, and considering our family's personal history, I would have panic-driven moments and thoughts go through my head. What helped was remembering how many times in the past the Lord had carried us safely in His arms, through many of our previous valleys, into safe ground.

I pray and wish for you and your families all the blessings of knowing that our Lord loves you. A blessed Christmas to one and all!

And yes, in case you are wondering, by God's grace, we are home for Christmas.

E-mail the author at cathy-babao@gmail.com



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RIO GRANDE RAPIDS

ANCHORS AWAY

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School for learning and recreation

THE PHYSICAL SPACE STUDENTS occupy contribute greatly to their emotional and educational experience. That is why students at Timberland Rudolf Steiner School (or TRSS, which follows the Waldorf Educational system) are set to spend their days in a sprawling educational enclave that makes the most out of Timberland Heights' nurturing embrace.

TRSS will be run and operated by the Manila Waldorf School Inc. (MWSI), the only Steiner school in Southeast Asia offering a full kindergarten to Grade 12 program, and the pioneer school of Steiner education in the Philippines.

Founded by philosopher Rudolf Steiner, the impulse behind Waldorf education is cultural renewal—fostered through a new understanding of the individual and community, and with as much emphasis on the mental and artistic development of students.

The Waldorf curriculum reinforces basic education with learning and experience based on a system of education that's in line with Timberland Heights' focus on community-building and natural recreation where the school will be located.

Using everyday experiences combined with the freedom of an intuitive teacher to adapt the lessons to situations, students learn not just through books, but through actual confrontations with them. The school's setting is no coincidence. With nature as its backyard, students at TRSS will be getting a hands-on experience on subjects and courses that need actual practical application to be effectively digested, such as the natural sciences.

And with courses such as gardening and woodwork, students also experience the leisure of craftwork.

With Timberland Heights already changing the landscape of residential living, bolstered by the rise of its Sports and Nature Club which sets a new standard in the active-leisure lifestyle, the addition of TRSS now redefines education within this exceptional community.

Visit www.filinvestland.com. Call 8567788, 4159468, 0917-8846237 and 1818-2327711; Timberland Sports and Nature Club (TSNC), 3769995, 3769978 (fax); or visit the TSNC Sales Office at Unit 302, JSB Bldg., Scout Delgado corner Tomas Morato, Quezon City.

Unique MBA-JD program in full swing

FAR EASTERN UNIVERSITY (FEU) is pleased to announce that the school's partnership with De La Salle University Graduate School of Business (DLSU-GSB) on the dual-degree program in law and management has grown to provide more opportunities for its students.

The MBA-JD Dual Degree Program, which was established in 2003, is the country's first post-graduate dual-degree program in business and law. The program was developed to prepare students to approach problems

from different perspectives and was designed to provide students with the understanding, knowledge and skills necessary to excel in two interrelated disciplines.

One of the exciting aspects of the course is the exchange-student program with a number of esteemed institutions abroad.

The first group of students to join the MBA-JD Dual Degree Program was sent to Florence, Italy, from May to June in 2005. The 10 students spent six weeks at the Florence campus of Syra-

cuse University, taking courses in International Negotiation and Intellectual Property.

By 2006, the MBA-JD Program went a step further and introduced select students to the cultural lifestyle of France and Central and Eastern Europe. The students were exposed to top European universities as they took courses on the European Union Legal System and the European Convention on Human Rights in France, and various law courses in London and Croatia.

In the summer of 2007, the

MBA-JD Dual Degree Program provided a greater variety of excellent international programs for selected students in six different countries around the world: Italy, Spain, Ireland, Russia, UK and France. Travel destinations even came as a bonus. The students were able to relax in the beautiful beaches of Ibiza and explore the cultural sites in Amsterdam and Vienna.

"It takes just five years to complete the dual-degree program because pre-approved courses are transferable between the two degrees, whereas to complete both degrees separately takes up to six years. Not only will this program save the students more time and money, it will also allow the students to broaden their horizons and experience the different cultures apart from their own," Andres Bautista, FEU Dean of Law said.

The program was also highlighted in FEU's theme of "Celebrating a Legacy of Excellence in International Partnerships/Global Exchange" last month. This is in line with the year-long celebration of FEU's 80th anniversary celebration in 2008.

Visit www.feu.edu.ph.

SUNDAY CROSSWORD

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo

THE TREE

ACROSS	49 Originally named	103 Fan shouts	8 Chemical suffix	50 "2 Minute Drill" airer	90 Football unit
1 Dub	50 Puzzles	104 Pink	9 Cyber-chuckle	51 Alabama port	92 Forsake
5 "Our Gang" boy	54 "Cool, man!"		10 Like a large newspaper ad	52 No longer sleeping	93 Disney's "Finding —"
12 Egyptian boy-king	57 Giorgio of fashion		11 Org.	53 Smiles like a villain	94 The Pointer Sisters' "So Shy"
15 Theater section	59 Hollywood	108 Horse riders' seats	12 Gin mills	54 Work up in a new form	95 IV solutions
19 Austrian artist Schiele	64 Cone or Cat	111 Nero's 56	13 Federations	55 Big record label	96 Peter Benchley novel
20 Bringing destruction	66 — toe in the water	112 "National Velvet" novelist Enid	14 Book after II Timothy	56 Greek D's	97 Pitches in
21 Peps up when a knot is tied	67 Double-reed woodwind	113 Casino town	15 On the — (fleeting)	58 Late '90s boy band	98 Duane or Gregg of song
23 They're rung	68 Mound	114 Meanie	16 Ear inflammation	60 Lazy sort	99 — Row (London street with many tailors)
25 Nutrient in citrus fruits	69 Mother of Liza Minnelli	115 Done at the wrong moment	17 Human — Project	61 Vardalos of Hollywood	100 Contorts
26 Reno-to-L.A. dir.	73 Shoe giant	117 Support staffs	18 Break free	63 First "American Idol" winner	101 Lansbury or Bassett
27 Tethers	74 "The Thin Man" canine	121 Certain female aria	22 Algebra, e.g.	65 Stable grain	105 Honshu sashes
28 Miss an opportunity	75 Algerian city	122 Powell of tap	24 "Lord, is —?"	69 "Ellen" actress	106 — gin fizz
30 Modest — fault	76 Driving peg	123 Encounter	29 Chimney stuff	70 Orsk's river	107 Cary of "The Princess Bride"
31 More grainy, as ale	77 Moray catcher	124 Aerie, e.g.	32 Pierre's head	71 Women's patriotic org.	108 Mexicali man
33 Red Lobster menu item	78 TV talent show	125 — Fernando	33 VIP of D.C.	72 Dole out anew	109 Wrathful
36 Former "Time" film critic	79 Moray catcher	126 Partially arid	34 Expressing thoughts	77 Wyatt of the Wild West	110 ER VIP
37 — Locka (Miami suburb)	80 Moray catcher	127 Cobras	35 Cell phone selection	79 Group	113 Orange skin
38 Slip — (mules, e.g.)	81 Aloft fleet		41 Oven output	80 Witchy woman	116 Wee bairn
39 "Aha"	85 Letters alter ems		42 Fumble	82 "Give — ring"	118 NASA craft
40 Aurora borealis	86 "Leave It to Beaver" boy		43 Fringe	83 Friend, in France	119 Chinese statesman Chiang — shek
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48 Weird	89 — board (nail file)		45 Agitated, with "up"	88 Suburb of Detroit	
	91 Porky's pad		46 Press, fold and stretch		
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answer on page G3

Get into the magazine habit

From page D4

lished in the magazines to make the discussions relevant to our community.

Love reading

Many teachers and parents find it difficult to urge their kids to read. Ces advises, "Love reading yourself! Values are caught, not taught. It must have been the subtle influence of seeing us, their mom and dad, poring over books that made our kids interested in reading, as early as 2 years old."

"Support from everyone in the family is also important," she continues. "Our kids' grandparents, aunts and yayas all read and indulge in learning games with them. In fact, our children have always enjoyed being read aloud to—even when they can already read on their own. It's the journey we've made together through different stories that was the most rewarding of all. My husband even wove enchanting tales of love and mis-

fits about fictional characters for several nights in a row, so much so that all our kids looked forward to bedtime!"

In school, the children are also encouraged by their teachers to frequent the library, which supplements their reading habit.

Perhaps the best tribute about Bookhive's mags comes from a satisfied mother, homemaker Suzette Custodio. "In the past, our daughter Angeli could not keep still and would rather play than read. We've tried many books to make her interested in reading. Imagine our surprise when Adventure Box came and Angeli sat on the couch. She read the magazine from cover to cover!"

The Owl and Box magazines make excellent Christmas gifts for children. For more information, call Ces Lecaroz Aceron at 3763409 or 0919-6213581, or e-mail magbox@bookhiveph.com. Visit www.magboxclub.com and www.bookhiveph.com.

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Get into the magazine habit

The best Christmas gift is genuinely listening to your kids

By Queena N. Lee-Chua

ASIDE FROM BOOKS, many kids are now interested in reading other print materials, such as children's magazines," says Celeste "Ces" Lecaroz Acon, president of Bookhive Philippines Inc. "Young kids gravitate to them. Magazines are one of the best reading bargains for our youth, especially those containing fun science, adventure stories and challenging games."

Educators and parents may find it financially easier to buy magazines than, say, an encyclopedia set. Since magazines come out regularly, they can also feature more up-to-date articles than books. They are a handy way to keep up with current happenings.

Bookhive

Ces, a former ABS-CBN business news anchor, and her husband Marvin, a lawyer, love to read. When they got married, their book collection filled an entire wall of their house. Not surprisingly, their children, Juancho and Hans in grade school, and Tressa and Justin in preschool, have developed the habit of reading early on. In summer, they would participate in Acon's public-reading programs, part of an education advocacy run by a friend.

When Ces' friend decided to focus on a cancer foundation, she picked up from where the latter left off, and decided to put up Bookhive, her own literacy and media center for kids.

Located on Scout Chuatoco Street in Quezon City, Bookhive offers everyone, especially preschool and elementary children, a chance to read good books for free. Aside from a well-stocked library, Bookhive also conducts storytelling sessions and reading workshops. The group's newest



PARENTS may find it financially easier to buy mags than an encyclopedia set.

venture? Promoting six premium kid magazines, by Bayard Press.

Award-winning mags

"I fell in love with the magazines at first sight," Ces laughs. "The layout and the content are captivating. I knew at once I had something great to share with teachers and parents who do not want kids immersed only in videos, TV or toys."

The monthly mags include stories and features from award-winning writers and artists. The "Box" series from Britain consists of three titles: the read-aloud "Story Box," for 3- to 6-year-old students; the chapter-book-like "Adventure Box," for 6- to 9-year-olds; and the homework helper "Discovery Box," for 9- to 12-year-olds, with sections on history, nature, science and the modern world.

The "Owl" series from the US also has three titles, "Chirp," "Chickadee," and "Owl," for the same three target audiences, in the above order. The mags contain humor, fables, mystery, science, sports and many more.

"The high-quality content, printing and production make these titles consistent award winners," says Ces. The Owl Spring 2007 Magazines received Gold and Silver Honors from the Parents' Choice Foundation in the US. The Association of

Educational Publishers had likewise given them the Distinguished Achievement and Golden Lamp Awards, the most prestigious awards in educational publishing.

Worldwide, these magazines reach more than 63 million subscribers.

Reading activities

Bookhive has begun a series of reading shows for schools. "Our hosts are not the usual party emcees that 'only give a show' but are themselves advocates of reading," says Ces. "Each show is unique and based on a particular magazine theme, enlivened by projects, experiments and activities featured in the issue. Kids are enticed to discover more and perhaps subscribe to their favorite titles."

Bookhive has also held several reading races in school fairs, where parents, teachers and children compete to successfully complete given tasks. The group hopes to do a corporate version for companies, to strengthen employees' family bonds through reading.

Bookhive also hosts Reading Camps to keep kids up to date on issues like global warming and responsible media education. Experts, such as scientists, help in handling the various topics pub-

GET INTO/D3

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RM de Leon

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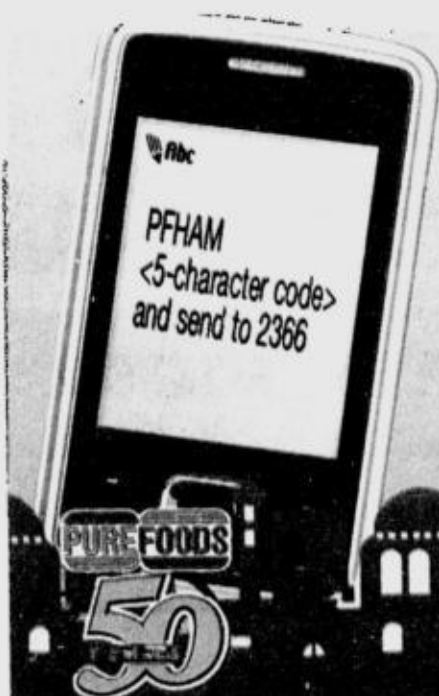
Maravilla
House and Lot

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1. Buy Purefoods Christmas Ham.
2. Look for the corresponding text raffle coupon.
3. Before texting the code, you must first register.
To register, text: PFHAM REG<NAME/AGE/GENDER/ADDRESS> to 2366.
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4. Text the code by texting PFHAM<5-character random alphanumeric code> to 2366.

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Per DOH-BFAD Permit No. 1140-S, 2007

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or life name/age/ city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Milestones

We welcome announcements of weddings and engagements. Submit names of engaged couple, names of parents, date and place of wedding, and gown designer along with a photo of the couple and a sketch of the bridal gown, if any, to the INQUIRER, P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City. E-mail to lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph. A photo of the bride and groom is required if the wedding has already taken place. Announcements will be printed depending on space availability and at no cost to the senders.

GERSALIA-GATACELO

Sedfrey Jose Gersalia, son of Oro (deceased) and Eleanor Gersalia, will wed Rina Grace Gatacelo, daughter of Rafael and Corazon Gatacelo, on Dec. 28 at the St. Michael Church in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City. Reception will follow at the Phil. Army Officers Clubhouse in Fort Bonifacio.

The bride will wear a fully beaded off-shoulder gown with Swarovski crystals with a long train designed by Linoi.



BUENAVENTURA-AUSTRIA

Anthony Buenaventura, son of Manuel de la Paz and Liza Buenaventura, wed yesterday (Dec. 1) Ciara Austria, daughter of Jun and Dorothy Austria, at the Malate Church. Reception was held at Casa Blanca, Intramuros.



ROBRIGADO-LIM

Jaime Robrigado, son of Mario and Jocelyn Robrigado, wed Sheryl Lim, daughter of engineer Manuel and Luzviminda Lim, at Union Church, Kennedy Road, Hong Kong, on March 4.

The couple will renew their marriage vows at Basilica Minore de Santo Niño de Cebu in Cebu City on Dec. 25. Reception will follow at Waterfront Cebu City Hotel.



SAN JUAN-PASCUAL

Elpidio S. San Juan II, son of Armando and Erlinda San Juan, wed Ma. Sunshine T. Pascual, daughter of Mario and Susan Pascual, on Dec. 15 at Saint Jerome's Parish Church in Morong, Rizal. Joel Niones designed the bridal gown.



YCAY-LIM

Jose Plaridel F. Ycay, son of Plaridel I. Ycay II and Aida F. Ycay, will wed Narnie C. Lim, daughter of Narciso R. Lim and Consuelo C. Lansangan, on Dec. 29, at Santuario De San Jose. Reception will follow at Crown Plaza Galleria Manila. The bride will wear a gown designed by Leonard Co.



LEE-TOLENTINO

Earl Terence M. Lee and Ann Kathrine E. Tolentino will tie the knot on Jan. 6, 2008, at the Manila Cathedral. Reception will follow at the Century Park Hotel Seafood Restaurant.



CONTRERAS-MADELAR

Dr. Christopher Contreras, son of Marina de la Cruz vda. Contreras, will wed Dr. Candice Seva Madelar, daughter of engineer Edilberto and Suzette Madelar, at Our Lady of Fatima Church, Legazpi City.



JIMENA-SAMSON

Jean Paul Jimena, son of Gideon and Ternora Jimena, will wed Helen Grace Samson, daughter of Antonio and Ofelia Samson, on Jan. 12, 2008, at Greenhills Christian Fellowship (South Metro), Daang Hari, Las Piñas City. Reception will follow at The Palms Country Club (Grand Ballroom) in Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City. The bride will wear a gown designed by Abet A. Alvarez.

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SMART
THE POWER TO LEAD

Sunday LIFE STYLE Travel

Presents for the wanderlust

By Bianca Consunji and Cheryl Tiu

2bU1 Correspondents

LUXE CITY GUIDES

(P450 each; P780-P1,100 for travel sets)

Looking for mint-vintage fashion and retro-design pieces when in Rome? Planning to stay in a teak house on one of Bangkok's rivers? Eyeing the hottest terraces to hang out with the Madrileños? Unlike its bulky travel counterparts, Luxe City Guide is big enough to feature over 300 entries of the best restaurants, clubs, spas and activities, but small enough to fit inside one's pocket. It's cheeky, authoritative and definitely a fun read.



Available at Fully Booked, Bibliarch at Glorietta 3, The Travel Club at TriNoma, and Naia 1 and 2. Each guide has a chic cover ranging from geometrics, floral designs and funky prints.

WAIGU

(P345-P895)

From the streets of Singapore to the beaches in Boracay, a lot of walking is involved. Now it can be done in style with Waigu flip-flops and sandals. The pretty embellishments and innovative straps add glamour to the casual

footwear. Best of all, they're affordable for their quality! Available at U Rustan's, Es-senses, Tan Gan, Havin' A Baby, Blue Chili Iloilo and Bogarte Boracay.

DAVID AND GOLIATH LUGGAGE TAGS

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Travelers will never lose sight of their baggage with these cute, colorful and humorous bag tags from David and Goliath. Available at David and Goliath, Power Plant Mall. No need to stick those airline identification stickers on your bags. These luggage tags will do the trick.



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"CHICKS rule"



"THIS sucks!"

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A modern-day traveler's most-trusted companion, Lonely Planet travel books are the best way to navigate and enjoy a new country or city. Where to go, what to do, where to stay, how to get there—all these and many more can be found here, with unbiased recommendations that's conscious of any traveler's budget. Available at PowerBooks.

Every Lonely Planet book is replete with information, photos and maps.



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Backpackers trust Jansport because of its roominess, durability and its ability to sit comfortably on the back. Recently, it introduced its Graphic Remix collection in the Philippines, where the bags are handcrafted by top local designers and illustrators. That means you'll never bump into anyone with the same bag! Available at leading department stores.

Jansport's Graphic Remix collection is produced with a very limited quantity.



SUPER Break Red Salmon by Electrolychee



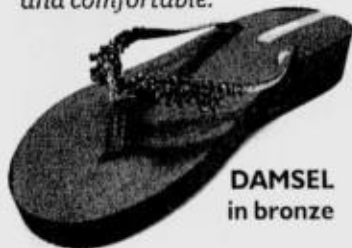
SUPER Break Classic Tan by Natasha Daradar

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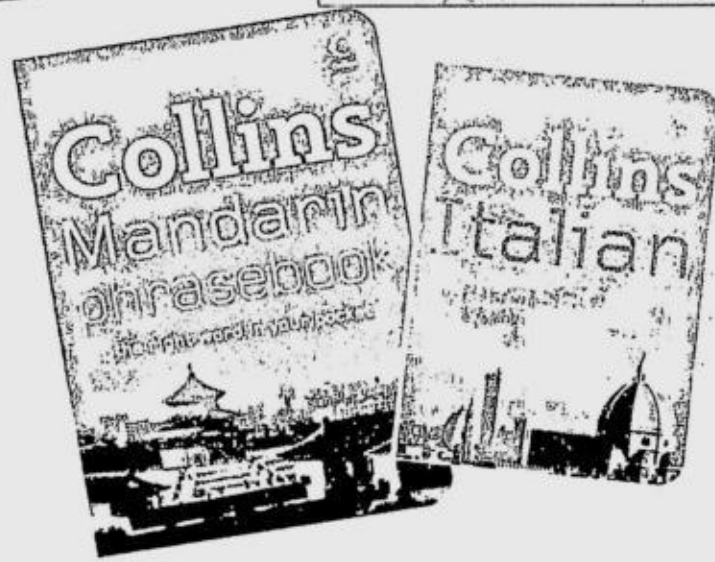
DAMSEL in bronze



JOANNA in green



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The first step to connecting with the locals.

Tagaytay hotel's festive offerings

TAAL VISTA HOTEL IS DECKING the hall and having a ball during the holidays with a wonderful Christmas celebration. Feel the spirit of the season as you step into the lobby aglow with hues of gold, silver, and russet and experience a plethora of festive offerings ranging from marvelous culinary selections to traditional Yuletide activities for the family.

Indulge in decadent holiday feasts and fantastic sights to behold at the café on the ridge and check out the exquisite buffets offering a fusion of Asian and International Flavors. Until Jan. 1, 2008, enjoy the sumptuous Yuletide Breakfast Buffet at P675 per person. Then starting today until Dec. 30, relish Holiday Dinner Buffets at P737 per person, except on the 24th and 25th, when the Christmas Eve Set Dinner is at P1,043 per person, and Christmas Day Fiesta Lunch and Dinner Buffets are at P921

per person. But don't miss the delectable Weekday and Weekend Lunch Buffets—ongoing for the whole month of December. To make the season more colorful, catch the Filipiniana cultural show every Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. Kids 6-12 years old dine half the price and all prices are inclusive of tax and service charge.

For a more intimate Christmas dinner, get cozy, warm up by the fireplace and dine on the finest Angus steaks or savor the Chef's Special of the Day at Season's. Bask in the cool weather of Tagaytay and dine al fresco at Taal Vista Ridge for a Festive Barbecue Dinner Buffet every Saturday night at P921 per person.

Usher in the year 2008 with a bang at the New Year's Blast Countdown Party. Celebrate all night long with a sumptuous buffet dinner, live band and other exciting performances, games, raffle, fantas-



tic prizes, great fireworks display, and much more. The Countdown Party ticket is at P1,950 net per person. Better yet, stay overnight on Dec. 31, with room rates starting at P3,950 for a superior room on a triple-sharing basis which includes breakfast, use of facilities and ticket to the Count-

down Party.

Taal Vista Hotel also features traditional Yuletide activities to bring joy and revelry to the whole family. Kids of all ages get a moment with Santa and receive sweet treats all Saturdays and Sundays of December at Santa's Corner. Children will have a merry

time at Paskong Palaro on Dec. 25 with exciting fun Filipino games with lots of prizes from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at the mid-garden. Be delighted with joyful carols as The Children's Joy Foundation choir performs at the Lobby Lounge Dec. 14-16 and 21-23 to lift your spirits throughout the Christmas season. Light up a Christmas tree and bring cheer to the Children's Joy Foundation and the children of St. Mary's House in Tagaytay City.

For reservations, call (046) 4131000, (632) 8864325, 7513088-89. Rediscover Taal Vista Hotel and experience a whole new lifestyle.

Taal Vista Hotel is owned by SM Investments Corp. and is managed by Fuego Hotels and Properties.

Contact Melanie Pallorina, assistant director of marketing communications, at (632) 8125173, 7513088-89 or 0928-6831122.

TRAVEL BRIEFS

Win a dream vacation

Visa cardholders flying to Hong Kong have a chance to win a dream vacation to any destination when they use their Visa at the Hong Kong International Airport during the holidays. The "Heart-Warming Winter" promotion runs until Jan. 8. Visa cardholders can instantly redeem rewards when they spend at least HK\$500. The eighth, 18th and 28th travelers to redeem rewards at Terminal Two will receive special prizes. In addition, for every HK\$800 spent, Visa cardholders will receive one entry to the weekly lucky draw and will also be entered into the grand prize lucky draw. Grand prize drawing will be on Jan. 15 (www.hongkong-airport.com).

Pinoy 'parol' lights up Sydney

The *parol*, hallmark of the Filipino Christmas, shone brightly on the streets of Sydney during a recent Christmas parade in the major Australian city. The Department of Tourism (DOT) initiated the Philippines' participation that included a float and performances by the Bayanihan Philippine National Folk-dance Company. Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano pointed out that the Philippines had one of the liveliest and longest Christmas celebrations in the world. He expressed the hope that, by showcasing the Pinoy flair for festivities, Australians would be encouraged to visit the Philippines. DOT Undersecretary for Tourism Planning and Promotions Eduardo Jarque Jr. and Team Asia Pacific's marketing head Rica Bueno led the Philippine delegation that was flown by Philippine Airlines.

More flights to Moscow

Singapore Airlines will fly daily to Moscow from Singapore starting March 20, 2008. The three-times-weekly service via Dubai will be complemented with a four-times-weekly non-stop service (that will continue on to Houston, United States). The Singapore-Moscow flight, with a three-times-weekly service via Dubai, will continue to operate Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The additional nonstop flight will operate Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday (7568899, Manila; 2326211, Cebu; or 2245608, Davao; singaporeair.com).

Palawan in good shape

Palawan is "doing well," according to a study published in National Geographic Traveler magazine's November-December issue. The "Doing Well" category is for places that are in relatively good shape but face minor problems. The province was part of 111 islands and archipelagos included in the fourth Destination Scorecard survey conducted by the National Geographic Center for Sustainable Destinations. In putting Palawan in the "Doing Well" category, the judges noted that it was "blessed with incredibly beautiful seascapes and landscapes." The magazine particularly recommends El Nido and the Calamianes Islands.

Dining promo

Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts in the Philippines and Philippine Airlines Mabuhay Miles renew their ties and extend the "Dine for Miles" promo until Dec. 30. This program enables members of PAL Mabuhay Miles to gain extra mileage while dining in style. The program allows guests to dine in any of participating restaurants and bars of all Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts and Traders Hotel in the Philippines and earn 300 miles for a minimum bill of P1,500 on a single-guest check and another 10 miles for every additional P50 on the bill. Call 8138888.

Maayong Pag-abot sa mga Smart Pinoy!

Home for the holidays, OFWs get a Grand Salubong from Smart Pinoy at the Mactan-Cebu International Airport.

Gone for two years, working as a domestic helper in DOHA, Qatar, Elsa Menchavez couldn't wait to be reunited with her five children and was excited to be spending Christmas back home. So, when Qatar Airways flight 656 arrived at the Mactan-Cebu International Airport (MCIA), she was the first to get off.

Beating everyone else to the arrival area, Elsa was the first to step into a surprise welcome for returning Filipino workers led by officials of Smart Communications, Inc. (SMART), the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and the Mactan-Cebu International Airport Authority (MCIAA).

A Hero's Welcome

The launch of the "SMART Pinoy OFW Grand Salubong" at MCIA was a festive affair packed with lots of surprises.

"We are honored that OWWA and the MCIAA have given us this opportunity to pay tribute to our Overseas Filipino Workers arriving in Cebu this holiday season. We hope that they enjoy the prizes and surprises that we have prepared for them," said Danilo J. Mojica, head of SMART's Wireless Consumer Division.

Upon arrival, our modern-day heroes received leis from SMART celebrity endorsers led by comedy king Dolphy, Viva Hot Babe Jhen Rosendahl, child star Steven Fermo, and tv personality Epy Guizon who hosted the short welcome program together with Matet Casino of DOLE.

Each of them also got a chance to win premium items including SMART cell phones and Wow Magic Sing microphones in an instant win pick-a-prize treat.

Cocktails were served at the arrival area, and entertainment was provided by the Southwestern University Dance Troop and the Department of Tourism's Rondalla.

Three Months of Surprises

A three-month tribute to OFWs, SMART Pinoy OFW Grand Salubong will run until February 28, 2008. Through this project, SMART, OWWA and the MCIAA, with partners Isuzu Philippines and Wow Magic sing, wish to give homage to our hard working countrymen who continue to provide invaluable contribution to the Philippines.

A total of 136 prizes will be raffled off in the Smart Pinoy OFW Salubong Grand Draw on February 28, 2008. These include 25 Wow Magic Sing microphones, 30 Smart Bro computer

packages, 50 flight miles equivalent to a domestic flight for two, 30 Smart e-Load businesses and a brand new Isuzu Crosswind XT Limited Edition.

For a chance to win in the grand raffle, returning Filipino workers need only to register their SMART SIMs to automatically earn one electronic raffle. Additional raffle entries can be earned when they use any of Smart's international services.

Cebu: Center of Visayas and Gateway to Mindanao

In the coming months OFWs going home to Visayas and those en route to Mindanao are expected to arrive at the Mactan-Cebu International Airport.

"Our kababayans are known to have made a lot of sacrifices. It is but fitting that even once a year, as they come home to their families, we make them feel how much we appreciate what they have done for us," said B/Gen. Danilo Augustu B. Francia, general manager of MCIAA.

"It will be a warm and VIP welcome for them," according to Wilfreda Misterio, Regional Director of OWWA 7.

Tribute through Service

The grand salubong is also SMART's way of thanking Filipino overseas workers for their patronage of SMART's growing line of innovative international services that keep them close to home and constantly in touch with their families wherever their work brings them.

"As the Philippines' biggest mobile network to the world, SMART will continue to give tribute to our OFWs through the creation of services and products which cater not only to their communication needs but also to their livelihood projects," said Jojo Malolos, head of International Business, SmartHub Financial Services Group.

Smart Pinoy was launched late last year as part of SMART's efforts to better serve the global Filipino. Its products and services are available in over 200 countries abroad in partnership with over 400 international network partners. These include IDD, international SMS and MMS, value-added services like international voice text and voice text to email, airtime reloading via Smart Load and remittance service like Smart Padala.

It is because of these services that Elsa and other 'Smart Pinoy's' have the fastest, easiest and most affordable means to connect and stay close to their loved ones all year-round.



SMART's Jojo Malolos (left) looks on as Dolphy gives a returning OFW a Smart Pinoy Grand Salubong hug.



Mr. Rosendahl, an electrical engineer, gets lucky in the pick-a-prize promo.



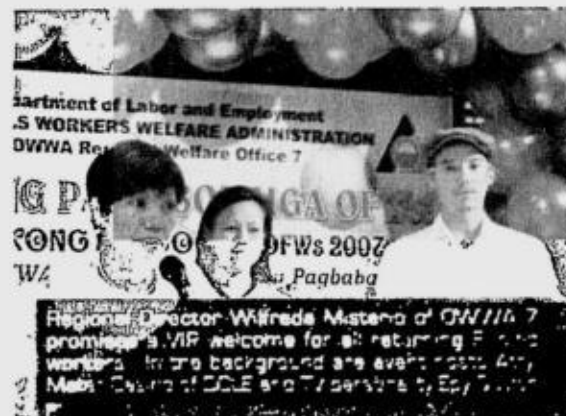
Members of the Southwestern University Dance Troop perform during the event.



Surprise! Surprise! Elsa Menchavez gets a warm welcome from SMART CEO and SMART celebrity endorsers Dolphy and Epy Guizon.



MCIAA officials welcome OFWs at the Mactan-Cebu International Airport in time for Christmas.



Regional Director Wilfreda Misterio of OWWA 7 promises a VIP welcome for all returning OFWs and workers. In the background are event hosts, Mr. Rosendahl, B/Gen. Danilo Augustu B. Francia, and SMART's Epy Guizon.



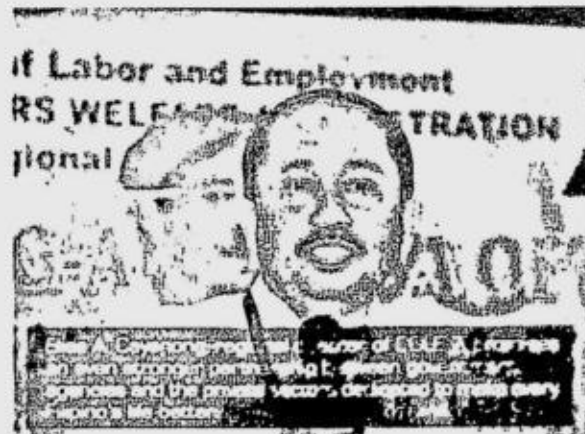
Jojo Malolos, head of International Business, SmartHub Financial Services Group, talks about the company's commitment to serving the global Filipino.



The Department of Tourism's Rondalla performs with Wow Magic Sing mascot Tensy.



Viva Hot Babe Jhen Rosendahl and B/Gen. Danilo Augustu B. Francia of MCIAA welcome one of our country's modern-day heroes.



B/Gen. Danilo Augustu B. Francia, general manager of MCIAA, welcomes OFWs at the Mactan-Cebu International Airport.



Child star Steven Fermo, whose dad is an anchor in Dubai, greets the OFWs.

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Niño's Nativity welcomed

FR. VIC ROBLES, new parish priest of Sta. Maria, Bulacan says the devotion to the Sto. Niño harks back to Jesus' birth.

Images of Christ as a baby and a little boy adorn Filipino homes and businesses. Devotion to the Sto. Niño is the oldest of all devotions in the Philippines, starting in 1521 when Magellan gave an image of the child Jesus to Queen Juana in Mactan, Cebu.

The image was lost, but recovered 44 years later by Spanish soldier Juan Camus. It has been drawing pilgrims for more than 400 years to the now Basilica Minore de Sto. Niño in Cebu.

On the third Sunday of January, pilgrims stand in line for

hours to see the Sto. Niño. The Sinulog festival has its origin from this devotion.

Poor devotees spread their mats near the basilica on the eve of the fiesta (Jan. 20 this year).

Prince of Peace

When Fr. Robles was assigned to Sta. Maria, he could not have been happier. He has a special devotion to Him. He told me to look up the Biblical passage that called the Child Jesus "the wonderful Counselor, the Prince of Peace."

With the help of Dr. Erwin Carabeo, I found Isaiah 9:6 that says: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Fa-

ther, Prince of Peace."

A Concelebrated Mass will be held Jan. 20, 8 a.m., by Bishop Rolando Tria Tirona.

The Congregation del Santissimo Nombre del Niño Jesus will register images for the exhibit at the PNB Financial Center Jan. 14-16, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. The exhibit opens Jan. 17, 5 p.m. Procession is on Jan. 27.

The feast of Sto. Niño de Providencia is on Jan. 26. Priests will heal the sick at 65 Pijuan St., BF Resort Village, Las Piñas starting at 7 a.m. Mass will be at the Mary Mother of the Church Parish at 3 p.m. A procession will follow.

Home in Bethlehem

Before his present assignment, Fr. Robles cared for the Home in Bethlehem in Baliuag,



REMEDIOS Ticzon Gonzales (fourth from left), Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, Msgr. Augusto Pedrosa and Our Lady of La Leche Movement members

Bulacan. The home has 100 abandoned children aged up to 12 years.

Some 200 children living outside are fed and sent to school. Fr. Robles said he was able to care for 300 children because God always provided.

Fr. Robles still helps Fr. Joseph Cruz, who is now in charge of the home. Text him at 0920-9145967

Cainta has celebrated on Dec. 1, the feast of Our Lady of Light since 1853 or even earlier. The Virgin has a secondary feast on Thursday after Pentecost Sunday.

In Cainta, the Virgin is recognized as patroness of reconciliation and those seeking conversion.

UST Christmas concert on TV

The annual classical Christmas concert of the University of Santo Tomas, "Symphony of Carols," will be aired at 4:30 p.m., Dec. 24, on ABC-5.

The concert, graced by no less than the new apostolic nuncio to the Philippines, Msgr. Edward Joseph Adams, was recently held at the UST Chapel (Santissimo Rosario Parish Church) and featured the top performing arts talents of the Pontifical University.

Leading the performers were the UST Symphony Orchestra under professor Hermenegildo Ranera and the world-renowned UST Singers under professor Fidel Calalang, both conductors being faculty members of the UST Conservatory of Music, a Center of Excellence in Music Education according to the Commission on Higher Education.

The concert also featured US-based Thomasian soprano Clarissa Ocampo, UST Guitar Ensemble, UST Liturgikon, UST Grade School Choir.

Goodbye, Ernest

The last time I saw Ernest Santiago was at Bobby Caballero's apartment. He told me to write a book about Mama Mary. Since I had written about her, he said I should collate my columns into a book.

In our years of friendship, I never knew Ernest was devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Perhaps he prayed for me because I worked on the book the next year and launched it in 2006, with our friend Bobby as emcee.

On the evening of Dec. 18, I said goodbye to Ernest during his wake at the Capilla de San Francisco de the Santuario de San Antonio. I told Ernest I would pray for the repose of his soul so that he would rest with Mama Mary in heaven. I asked him to pray for me, as well.

Ernest's death is a reminder of our own mortality and teaches us of the need to be closer to God.

Christmas is the best time to reflect on the significance of Christ's birth to save us. I wish you all peace of mind, good health and prosperity. This column is 20 years old this month. Thanks for all your support. The Lord be praised!

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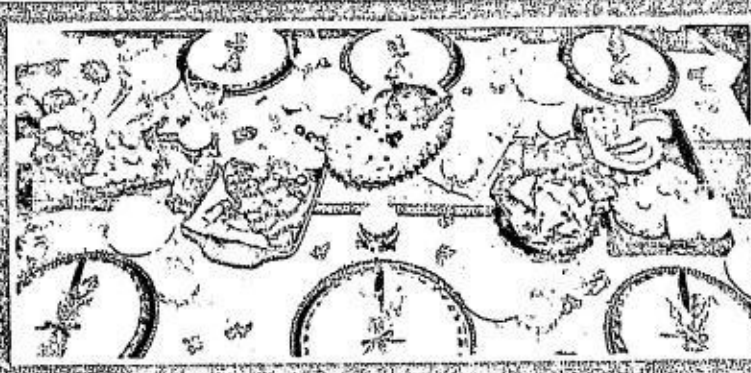
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Sunday LIFE STYLE



Neo 'noche buena'

THE Solomon Guest House team of De La Salle College of St. Benilde's School of Hotel, Restaurant and Institution Management showcase Fusion Noche Buena.

Inquirer asked budding chefs from three schools to tweak the standard midnight fare and the results are all worthy of Christmas

Yuletide fusion of flavors

Text by Rowena C. Burgos
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

RIGHT AFTER THE MISA DE Aguinaldo, the highlight of the season, families go home to a grand midnight meal known as Noche Buena.

A thanksgiving rite, Noche Buena is a time when the entire family sits down for supper with a table laden with lots of food. Ham, *queso de bola* and fresh fruits are the standard fare served for a typical Noche Buena. But the homemaker can always add a personal touch to this feast.

The Solomon Guest House team of the De La Salle-College of St. Benilde (DLS-CSB) School of Hotel, Restaurant and Institution Management suggests a Fusion Noche Buena showcasing dishes such as Salmon in Filo Pastry, Christmas Paella, Three-Cheese Prawn Gratin, Roast Pork loin in Tortilla Wrap and Holiday Mango Pandan. The group finished the five dishes, which cost P3,000.35, in two and a half hours.

Headed by chef Pam Obieta, the team's members are third-year students of Culinary Arts who will man the school's showcase restaurant in January. They have won the grand prize in competitions of Reynold's, Century Tuna, Goldilocks and Nestle.

"For this Fusion Noche Buena, we thought of something simple so INQUIRER readers won't have a hard time doing them. Fusion means combining techniques of other countries and locally sourced ingredients. At St. Benilde, there's a course on Filipino Cuisine wherein regions are discussed so students learn about their food and culinary styles. For the final exams, they do fusion but they have to know the foundation first," explains Obieta, program coordinator of DLS-CSB's Culinary Arts.

To give the feast a touch of fusion, the baked Salmon wrapped in *filo* dough was marinated in *calamansi* and salt and pepper. Its salsa for the filling had onion, tomatoes and capers.

Roast Pork Loin was dry rubbed and presented in tortilla *pritchon* style with *hoisin* leaves and cucumber.

According to Obieta, the idea behind the Christmas Paella was to include ingredients available in one's pantry or refrigerator so the dish features cooked ham, red and green bell pepper, green peas and chicken. "We added *annatto* oil and *kasubha* to make it Filipino," Obieta says. "The twist lies in the sun-dried tomatoes and *tinapa*. The saltiness and sweetness of these ingredients complement each other."

The baked Three-Cheese Prawn Gratin was made from *queso de bola*, mozzarella and *kesong puti*. The team mixed it with garlic and butter, and stuffed it in prawns. The red and green

Bonding sa Buhay **Coke** Buksan Mo™



ASSORTED Cheese Platter



BABY Greens with balsamic vinaigrette



SALAD of Buffalo's Milk Cheese and Slow-Roasted Tomatoes



Special stuff for a special night

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Jim Guiao-Punzalan

THE HOLIDAYS ALWAYS BRING the promise of cozy family dinners, festive cocktail parties, maybe even a big bash or two. These joyful days can be the most exciting time of the year, but also the most stressful, especially if you are the one doing the planning and the cooking. The easiest and foremost entertaining tip of all is to plan your menu ahead of time.

So, to help you with planning your holiday spread, we commissioned talented students of the Center for Culinary Arts (CCA) in Katipunan Road, QC to come up with an international Noche Buena feast. They worked around the reasonable budget of P3,000.

After only a day of brainstorming, the graduating students of CCA composed of Garie Quiambao, Mark Marquez, Francis Tarin and Miraflor Cruz was all geared up to whip up six delicious dishes with European influences.

The students, champions in various culinary competitions including Chefs on Parade and Salon Culinaire, were under the supervision of CCA bigwigs such as chef James Antolin, program manager; chef Joey Herrera, instructor; chef Mike Yap, instructor; and Nancy Reyes Lumen, advisory board member.

"We decided to present the food buffet-style because it's much easier for the host to do than to plate each and every food," explained Cruz.



FRUIT-AND NUT-STUFFED Roasted Pork Loin

The Noche Buena meal, ideal for a family of five, started off with a Salad of Slow-Roasted Tomatoes with Buffalo's Milk Cheese. The buffalo cheese was bought at Market! Market! in Taguig for only P90 a pack. The ready-to-eat mixed greens were purchased at P60 per bag.

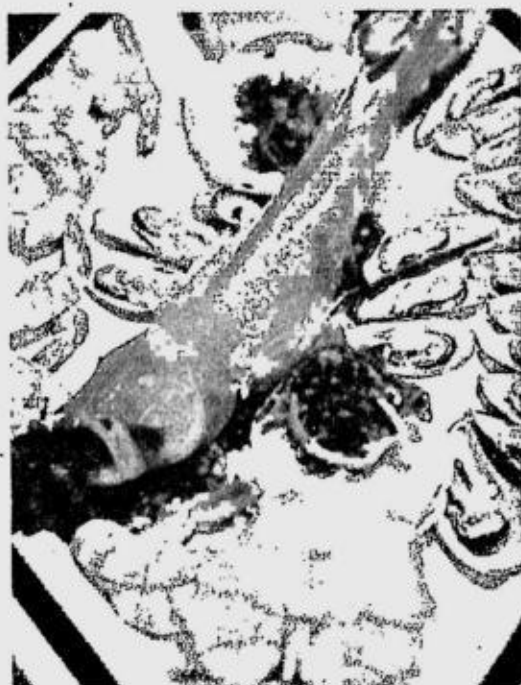
"We just added cherry tomatoes to the greens and prepared a simple balsamic vinaigrette," said Quiambao.

Another appetizer, Crostini of Chicken Liver Paté with Cherry Tomatoes and Alfalfa Sprouts, consisted of slices of toasted bread with liver paté spread and topped with chorizo, cherry tomatoes and alfalfa sprouts.

The Assorted Cheese Platter was all local cheeses arranged nicely in a platter—*queso de bola*, *kesong puti* rolled in pink peppercorn and cheddar cheese. Seedless grapes and pistachio nuts added a festive look.



CHOCOLATE Fondue with strawberries, marshmallows, pineapples and honeydew



COLD Seafood Platter with Saffron Aioli and Cocktail Sauce

For the main course, the Fruit and Nut Stuffed Roasted Pork Loin would definitely impress any family guest.

"We bought the whole loin, already clean and trussed, at Metro Gaisano for P600," said Yap. "All we did was stuff it with nuts and fruits like dried raisins and apricots. It takes only one hour to cook in the oven."

The pork dish was a hefty piece sliced thinly and accompanied with veggies like shallots, carrots, potatoes and French beans. The veggies were glazed (meaning, boiled and then cooked in sugar and butter to give it a slight sweetness).

Seafood seems to be present at every dining table during the season of bingeing. Therefore, the group produced a Cold Seafood Platter with Saffron Aioli and Cocktail Sauce.

"The seafood came from the seaside market on Macapagal Avenue (Pasay City)," said Yap. "The rock lobster cost P600 per kilo but we only got half a kilo."

Why not a buffet feast with roast pork stuffed with the earth's bounty as main course and centerpiece? Eager culinary students show the way



The lapu-lapu cost P150; prawns at P300, mussels and seaweeds at P30 each. The seafood were either poached or steamed and then served cold with the usual cocktail sauce and saffron aioli.

Fondue is a great way to cap a fabulous meal. The students prepared Chocolate Fondue with strawberries, pineapple, honeydew and marshmallows.

"We wanted a complete meal for our Noche Buena table," said Yap. "We used up all the budget and probably exceeded about P50 but there were still plenty of leftover ingredients which can still be used for other dishes."

Salad of Buffalo's Milk Cheese and Slow-Roasted Tomatoes

1 pack local buffalo milk cheese (approximately 200 g)
500 g ripe plum tomatoes, cut in half lengthwise

¼ c olive oil
1 bunch basil leaves
1 bag mixed salad greens, pre-washed
¼ c balsamic vinegar
¾ c olive oil

Toss the tomatoes in ¼ c of olive oil, salt and pepper and arrange, cut side down, on a sheet tray. Cook in a 275°F oven for three to four hours until most of the moisture has evaporated.

Drain the cheese from its brine and cut into uniform ¼-inch-thick slices.

Make the dressing by whisking the olive oil into the vinegar. Season to taste and chill the dressing.

To finish, arrange the cheese and tomatoes alternately in a platter. Garnish with basil leaves and serve with mixed greens and balsamic vinaigrette on the side.

Cold Seafood Platter with Saffron Aioli and Cocktail Sauce

500 g mussels scrubbed
750 g prawns, peeled and deveined
350 g grouper (*lapu-lapu* *señorita*) or snapper (*mayamaya*), drawn and dressed
2 pc rock lobster (approximately 250 g each)

250 g fresh seaweed, rinsed well in cold water

Cocktail sauce
Saffron aioli

Place the mussels in a pan and add just enough water to cover. Cover the pan with a lid and set over moderate heat. Bring the liquid to a simmer. Remove the pan from the heat as soon as the mussels open. Chill the mussels in the liquid rapidly, over an ice bath. Set aside.

SPECIAL/F3

CROSTINI of Chicken Liver Paté with cherry tomatoes and alfalfa sprouts



TEAM Center for Culinary Arts: Garie Quiambao, Francis Tarin, chef-instructor Joey Herrera, Miraflor Cruz, Mark Marquez, chef-instructor Mike Yap and chef James Antolin, program manager.

Pinoy-style budget feasting

Text by Cheche V. Moral
Photos by Chito Vecina

WHEN IT CAME TO THE Noche Buena, it used to be *wala ng budget-budget*," said Nikki Banzon, who teaches Philippine Gastronomy at the American Hospitality Academy Philippines (108 Aguirre Bldg., HV de la Costa cor. Soliman Streets, Salcedo Village, Makati; tel. 8927372/7702). "But now we have to. If we can't afford an entire *lechon*, we just get the head, or we roast a chicken. Roasts are the stars of any feast."

With generous helpings of creativity and imagination, a traditional Pinoy Noche Buena on tightened purse strings can be as festive as we want it, said Banzon. She helped plan a Noche Buena menu for six people consisting of traditional Filipino fare, with the culinary students of AHA and chef-instructor Thad Gayanelo. Lifestyle set the budget at P3,000.

Exceeding the limit by a few hundred pesos (very Pinoy, we might add), the AHA students came up with a banquet redolent of every Lola's or Nanay's kitchen.

There was *morcon*, a tender and flavorful log of beef sirloin; savory *galantina*; chorizo-dotted *bringhe*; and a beautifully roasted chicken.

The luscious *ube halaya-leche flan* dessert table even included extra treats like *yema*, *tsokolate tablea*, *mangga't suman*, *queso de bola* and *jamon*—the lat-



ROAST Chicken



TEAM American Hospitality Academy Philippines: Jaan Aler, Roxanne Castillo, Tina Abdon, Dyan Tablante, Archie Abejaron, chef Thad Gayanelo, Nikki Banzon, Queenie Argomido, Irma Policarpio, Joy de la Rosa, Ramon Urbano, Theodore Salonga and Nesly Bretana

Culinary students whip up a banquet redolent of Lola's or Nanay's kitchen



MANGGA'T Suman

ter two round-shaped foods that Filipinos believe to be harbingers of good fortune.

Taking into account Pinoy's love for chicken, the students prepared two bird dishes, and served the rice dish *bringhe* in lieu of a noodle or pasta dish. They made sure it was a one-carb meal, such that the ubiquitous macaroni salad didn't make its way on this table.

Save for the *bringhe* and roast chicken, all the dishes can be prepared a day ahead and stored in the refrigerator, Gayanelo said.

They also showed how presentation can add pizzazz to an otherwise modest table. Roxanne Castillo, a student who headed the setup committee, used items readily found in the house to capture the authentic Filipino theme, like *banig* mats, candles and fresh-picked bougainvilleas to spruce up the table.



UBE Halaya

PINOY-STYLE/F4

Special stuff for a special night

From page F2

Bring a large pot of water to a poaching temperature (barely a simmer) and add enough salt to make the liquid briny in taste. Add the prawns and poach for more or less two minutes, until just done. Remove the prawns from the poaching liquid and set aside to cool.

Bring a large pot of water to poaching temperature and add enough salt to make the liquid briny in taste. You may also add a dash of acid in the form of citrus juice or vinegar as well as aromatic herbs and spices for added flavor.

Season the fish with salt and pepper. Gently submerge the fish into the liquid and poach until just done. This may take seven to 10 minutes depending on the size and thickness of the fish. Remove the fish from the liquid and chill for service.

Bring a large pot of water to a

poaching temperature (barely a simmer) and add enough salt to make the liquid briny in taste. Add the rock lobsters and poach for more or less 5 minutes, until just done. Remove the prawns from the poaching liquid and set aside to cool.

Set the seaweed on a large chilled platter and neatly arrange the mussels, prawns, lobsters and fish on it. Serve with cocktail sauce and saffron aioli.

Saffron Aioli:

1 pinch saffron filaments
2 tbsp hot water
2 cloves garlic
½ c mayonnaise

Steep the saffron in the hot water for several minutes. Pound the garlic to a complete paste. Combine the saffron filaments, including the liquid, the garlic paste and the mayonnaise. Adjust seasoning, as necessary, with salt and pepper.

Fruit-and-nut-stuffed Roasted Pork Loin

1 pc boneless pork loin roast, trimmed and trussed (approximately 1½ k)

2 tbsp pistachios, shelled
2 c dried fruits (such as apricot, prunes, figs, raisins), pitted if necessary

1 c calvados or brandy
2 c pork, beef or chicken stock

Cornstarch slurry, as needed

Soak the dried fruits in the brandy to rehydrate, preferably overnight. Drain the fruits and set aside the remaining brandy for your sauce.

Put half of the fruits in a food processor and process to a pasty puree. Add the remaining fruits and pulse to a coarse mixture. Fold in the nuts. Place the fruit-and-nut mixture into a piping bag and set aside.

With a long narrow bladed knife make an incision through the center of the pork loin running from one end to

the other. You may use a honing steel or a similar tool to uniformly widen the incision. Pipe the fruit-and-nut mixture into the pork loin.

Season the roast with salt and pepper. In a hot pan with a thin film of oil, sear the roast until it is well browned all over. Transfer the roast to a rack in a roasting pan and place in a 350°F oven.

Cook the roast until the temperature reads 145°F at the center. This may take 1 to 1½ hours. Remove the roast from the oven, cover loosely with foil to maintain heat, and allow it to rest at least 20 minutes before carving.

While the roast is resting, make your accompanying sauce. Take the roasting pan in which the pork was cooked.

Pour off any excessive grease and set over the stovetop on moderate heat. Allow any roast drippings to caramelize. Take care not to burn the drippings. Pour the brandy reserved from soaking

the dried fruit. Scrape any caramelized food bits stuck to the pan. Reduce the brandy until almost dry. Add the meat stock and simmer until reduced to almost half.

Thicken the liquid to your desired consistency by whisking in some cornstarch slurry. Season to taste. By this time, your roast should be ready for carving. Serve with roasted potatoes, green beans and glazed carrots.

Chocolate Fondue

500 g bittersweet chocolate, rough chopped

2 tbsp amaretto or frangelico or kirsch or liqueur of choice (optional)

Assorted dippables: strawberries,

bananas, marshmallows

Put the chocolate in a bowl and melt it, stirring with a rubber spatula, over a pot of gently simmering water. Add liqueur if desired. Transfer to a fondue pot and start dipping away.

CELEBRATE A COCA-COLA CHRISTMAS

Christmas won't be complete without a family Noche Buena, and Coke makes this salu-salo even more special by enlivening meals and making family bonding warmer.

This Coke Christmas Spirit lived on as the Coca-Cola Caravan traversed various cities and barangays this December to celebrate family Christmas cheer and bonding. Decked in bright Christmas lights and carrying loads of fun and games with it, the Christmas Caravan toured different cities and barangays to liven up the holidays.

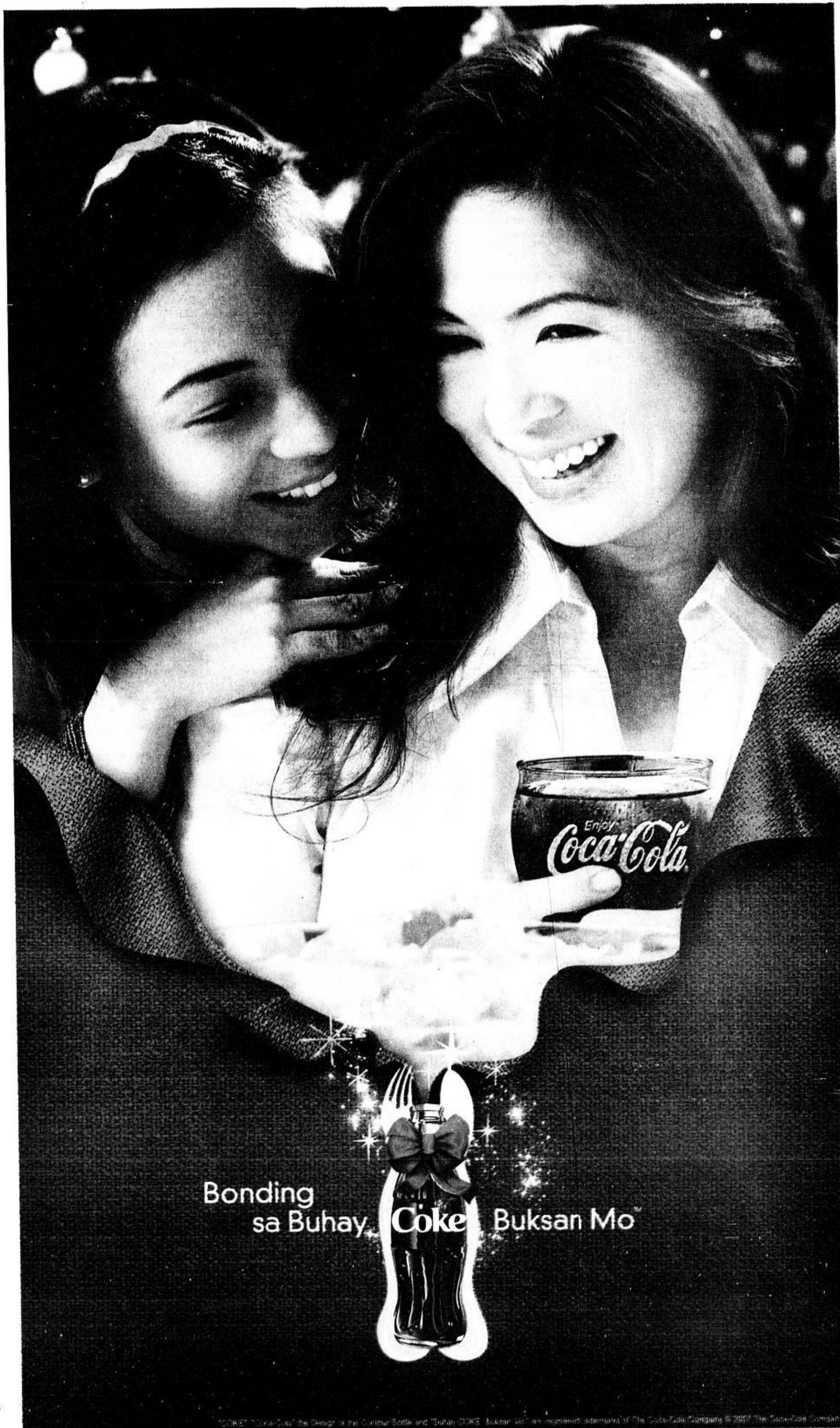
With fun activities, games and prizes, it's successful Baguio leg garnered close to 40,000 visitors. And because it toured other cities and barangays in GMA as well as the rest of Luzon, the Coke Caravan has touched hundreds of thousands of people during this Christmas season.

But aside from that, Coke brings you the Coca-Cola Kasalo sa Pasko Promo which would surely be a Christmas treat for every family. Just buy Coke Litro and look under the cap to see if it's one of the winning Kasalo Caps. Then present the winning Kasalo Cap, along with 4 red Litro caps, to redeem special Kasalo Spoon and Fork collectibles at participating sari-sari stores and public markets nationwide. As of December 2, close to half a million cutlery sets have been redeemed and millions more to be given away until the redemption period ends on February 21, 2008.

With sets of Kasalo Spoons and Forks, and Coke Litro you're sure to have a splendid dining experience every day of the year.



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SALMON in Filo Pastry



ROAST Porkloin in Tortilla Wrap



DLS-CSB's Solomon Guest House team: Chef Pam Obieta; Byron Niel Francisco; Rene Lorenzo Cantimbuhan; Renz Leyco; John Christopher Manalang; Jose Manuel Dos Remedios; Prince Enriquez; Jemimah Casten; Ellice Ong; Stephanie Kho; Mariel Matunan; Richard Ng Chiu; Boris Villanueva; Jerwyn Rabo; Norman Lorenz Evaristo; Nathaniel Pilar; Lalaine Lim; Rachelle Karen T. Ong; Marie Ann Lim; Nikki Pakdepraprut; and Jade Christopher Lee

Yuletide fusion of flavors

From page F1

bell pepper gave the dish a Christmas touch.

In making the colorful Holiday Mango Pandan, green and red gulaman and chilled yellow mango were used. This dessert was then layered with cream and condensed milk.

Salmon in Filo Pastry

1,000 g salmon fillet
Salt and pepper, to taste
3 pc calamansi salsa:
70 g onions, white
120 g tomato, local
3 g spring onions
60 g capers
5 pc calamansi
30 ml olive oil
1 pack filo pastry (or lumpia wrapper)

125 g butter, clarified
Preheat oven to 180°C.
Cut salmon into 60 g fillets. Marinate with calamansi juice, season with salt and pepper and set aside.

To make salsa: dice tomatoes, white onions, spring onions and capers.

Mix all ingredients together, add a little calamansi juice and season with salt and pepper. Drizzle with olive oil.

To assemble, fold a sheet of filo pastry into three. Place sliced salmon on one end of the wrapper and top with salsa. Fold sides to create a pocket, then fold forward to completely wrap the salmon.

Brush with clarified butter. Bake in a preheated oven for 20-25 minutes.

Makes 25 pieces (60 g/pc).

Christmas Paella

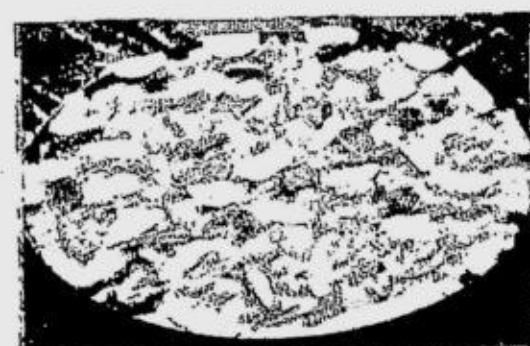
100 ml olive oil (annatto oil)
50 g annatto seeds
50 g onions, white, minced
50 g garlic, minced
150 g red bell pepper, strips
150 g green bell pepper, strips
100 g sun-dried tomatoes, diagonal strips

500 g chicken breast, cut into cubes
500 g cooked ham, cubes
2 k Calrose (rice)
12 c stock, chicken
40 g kasubha
500 ml tomato sauce
100 g green peas
Smoked fish (tinapa)
5 pc eggs (boiled)

To make annatto oil, sauté seeds and oil. Then remove seeds by straining.



THREE-CHEESE Prawn Gratin



CHRISTMAS Paella



PRITCHON

Saute onions, garlic, chicken, ham, sun-dried tomatoes, green peas, and sliced bell peppers in annatto oil.

Add Calrose (rice) in the same pan and continue sautéing. Add stock a little at a time. Add kasubha and stir until well-distributed. Stir in the tomato sauce. Season with salt and pepper.

Cover pan with aluminum foil and cook over low heat until the rice is cooked.

In a separate pan deep fry smoked fish (tinapa) and shred into flakes for toppings. Cut boiled eggs into wedges and garnish.

Three-Cheese Prawn Gratin

1,000 g prawns
Salt and pepper, to taste

Olive oil, as needed
Dash of cayenne pepper (optional)
Dash of paprika
1 dayap juice
Stuffing:
50 g butter, unsalted, softened
25 g garlic, minced
50 g red bell pepper, chopped
50 g green bell pepper, chopped
100 g kesong puti/goat cheese (crumbled)

100 g queso de bola, grated
100 g Mozzarella, grated
Dayap
5 g red bell pepper, thinly sliced
5 g green bell pepper, thinly sliced
Preheat oven to 180°C.

Butterfly prawns by cutting along the back. Keep the shell on but remove the vein. Season prawns with salt, pepper, olive oil, cayenne, pepper, lime and paprika.

To make stuffing, combine mozzarella, queso de bola, kesong puti (goat cheese), garlic, and soft butter. Fold in chopped red and green bell pepper.

Fill prawns with cheese mixture, top with red and green bell pepper strips.

Bake in preheated oven until prawns turn orange and cheese turns golden brown.

Roast Porkloin in Tortilla Wrap

2,000 g Porkloin
Rub:

5 g garlic powder
5 g onion powder
5 g cayenne powder
5 g paprika
5 g cajun spice
2 g salt
2 g pepper

Marinate:
100 ml Worcestershire sauce
50 ml mustard
3 g star anise, ground

Wrap:
12 pc tortilla wrapper
200 ml hoisin sauce
100 g leeks
200 g cucumber

Truss the Porkloin.

Preheat oven to 175deg C (350° F)

In a mixing bowl, mix garlic powder, onion powder, cayenne pepper, paprika and Cajun spice to make a dry rub.

Coat pork with dry rub and season with salt and pepper.

In another bowl, mix together Worces-

tershire, mustard and star anise to make a marinade. Apply and marinate meat for at least 1 hour.

Sear the porkloin on hot pan to create a nice brown crust.

Then roast porkloin in preheated oven for about an hour. You can also check pork using a meat thermometer. When the internal temperature of the thickest part of meat is around 155°C (302°F), remove from oven. Rest for 15-20 minutes before slicing.

Slice cucumbers and leeks into strips.

Heat or grill tortilla wrappers.

To serve, place thin slices of pork in a tortilla wrapper, add hoisin sauce, cucumbers, and chopped leeks and form into a wrap.

Holiday Mango Pandan

1 bundle pandan leaves

1 pack red gulaman

1 pack green gulaman

500 g yellow mango cubes

500 ml all-purpose cream

200 ml condensed milk

Pandan extract/flavoring

Prepare gelatin according to package instruction. (Note: Boil water with pandan leaves. Discard leaves and used flavored boiling water to set gelatin)

Whip all-purpose cream, condensed milk, and a teaspoon of pandan extract.

Assemble in a tall narrow glass. Alternately layer red gelatin, green gelatin, and mango cubes. Place a spoonful of cream after each layer.

Chill. Best served cold.

DLS-CSB is on Arellano Avenue and Estrada Street, Malate, Manila. Call 5238888 loc. 276 or 5257562; visit www.dls-csb.edu.ph



GLAZING prawns to make the dish more appetizing



HOLIDAY Mango Pandan

ADDING finishing touches to the dessert



Pinoy-style budget feasting

From page F1



FRUIT Punch



GLAZED ham, queso de bola and pan de sal



A LITTLE trim goes a long way in this homey Noche Buena table.

"We don't usually put in this much effort in our own homes," Castillo said, "but you can see what difference a little trimming does to the mood."

If the food seemed like "too much for a family of six," Banzon said this is typical of Filipinos. "We like to have leftovers for the next day, and we always cook extra for relatives and friends who may drop in unannounced."

Roast Chicken

1 whole chicken, cleaned
¼ c calamansi juice
¼ c soy sauce
1 pc tanglad (lemongrass)
4 cloves minced garlic
30 g minced ginger
Salt and pepper

Combine all ingredients and rub on to chicken. Stuff with washed tanglad leaves.

Marinate overnight in the chiller.

Preheat oven to 350°F to 425°F. Place chicken in roasting pan. Roast for 1 hour or until the thermometer reads 165°F for 15 seconds.

Chicken Galantine

1.3 kg whole chicken, deboned
80 ml brandy

Stuffing:
Ground chicken meat (from whole chicken)

500 g pork fat
Iodized salt, to taste

Ground white pepper, to taste
30 g bel pepper, diced medium
40 g dred apricot, soaked in brandy

35 g pitachio, blanched and peeled



THE SWEET tooth's table laden with ube halaya, leche flan, yema, mangga't suman, plus a pot of hot tsokolate tablea and fruity pineapple-orange punch



MORCON



CHICKEN Galantine

A pinch of ground coriander

¼ c raisins

2 hard-boiled eggs

Poaching liquid:

1 l chicken stock

70 g white onion, chopped

35 g carrots, chopped

35 g celery, chopped

1 pc bay leaf

5 g black peppercorn

2 g thyme

2 pc whole cloves

Iodized salt, to taste

Wash the deboned chicken and marinate in brandy. Chill overnight.

Carefully remove the chicken meat from the skin without tearing the skin. Process the chicken meat in the food processor until smooth. Add the pork fat just enough to coarsely chop.

In a bowl, mix all the ingredients and spread it onto the skin. Roll it into a log. Wrap it with cheesecloth and tie

with butcher's twine.

Mix all ingredients of the poaching liquid in a saucepan and bring to a simmer. Submerge the rolled meat in the liquid and simmer for about two hours.

When done, don't remove the meat from the poaching liquid. Just let it cool and wrap tightly before putting in the chiller overnight. Slice and serve chilled.

Bringhe

80 g pork belly, diced medium

45 ml vegetable oil

5 g galangal, minced

5 g garlic, minced

60 g red onion, chopped

3 stalks lemongrass, chopped

500 g chicken pieces, adobo cut

40 g red bell pepper, diced medium

um

40 g green beans

Patis, to taste

Black pepper, ground, to taste

Salt, to taste

1 c glutinous rice, soaked

1 pc Chinese chorizo, sliced

2 c water

60 ml coconut milk

1 tsp turmeric

Banana leaves

Render pork. Add oil. Sauté garlic, galangal, onion and lemongrass. Add turmeric, bell pepper and green beans. Add the rice and mix a little to coat. Season with salt and pepper and patis.

Add chorizo and water. Stir gently and bring to a boil. Simmer covered with banana leaves.

PINOY-STYLE/F5

Pinoy-style budget feasting

From page F4

Morcon

750 g beef sirloin, whole (to make into a roulade)
 1 tsp each salt and pepper
 75 g carrots, cut into batonette
 75 g celery, batonette
 3 pc chorizo Bilbao, batonette
 3 tbsp pickle relish
 ½ c grated quick-melt cheese
 100 g sliced bacon
 3 tbsp all-purpose flour
 100 ml oil
 2 pc onion, chopped
 2 tbsp minced garlic
 2 tbsp tomato paste
 250 g tomatoes, chopped
 300 ml tomato sauce
 3 pc bay leaf
 1-1½ liter beef stock
 Season the flattened meat with salt and pepper. On one side of the meat, line the carrots, celery and chorizo. Top with pickle relish and grated cheese.

Tightly roll the meat. Using a butcher's twine, tie the meat. Start on one end and make a zigzag pattern on the meat, ensure that the end knot is on one end of the beef. Roll the roulade on flour.

In a heavy casserole, heat oil. Sear the meat on all sides until light brown. Remove the meat from the oil and set aside.

Using the same pan, saute the garlic, onions, tomato paste, bay leaf and chopped tomatoes for about three minutes. Add tomato sauce and beef stock and allow to simmer, about 8-10 minutes. Add the beef roulade. Allow to simmer for three hours, or until softened. Add more beef stock as needed. Remove from heat.

Remove the roulade from the sauce and allow to cool for easier slicing.

Strain the remaining sauce and reduce until thickened. Slice the roulade at least ¾-inch thick. Serve with the sauce.

Yema

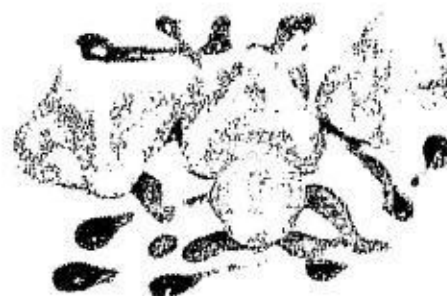
500 ml condensed milk
 8 egg yolks
 300 g granulated white sugar
 Cook egg yolks and milk in a double boiler. Stir continuously until the mixture holds together and forms into a ball and shape into bite-size balls. Sprinkle a pan with the sugar. Roll yema balls in sugar and wrap individually in colored cellophane.

Leche Flan

300 g white sugar
 500 ml evaporated milk
 7 egg yolks
 1 tbsp vanilla extract
 ½ tsp lime zest

Caramelize 100-g sugar over low heat in a heavy saucepan. Pour to coat bottom of llanera.

Combine milk, eggs, vanilla, lime zest and remaining sugar in a bowl. Mix well and strain into the caramel-



YEMA

coated llanera. Bake in a bain-marie in a moderate, preheated oven (180°C) for 45 minutes, then reduce heat to 140°C and continue to bake for 15 more minutes. Cool and unmold to a serving platter.

Ube Halaya

750 g ube (purple yam)
 200 g sugar
 500 ml coconut milk
 200 ml condensed milk
 100 g butter
 Boil the yam until tender. Peel and

cut into cubes. Grind in a food processor with the sugar and coconut milk. Transfer to a heavy casserole.

Add the condensed milk and butter and cook over low heat, stirring continuously until the mixture holds together and starts separating from the pan. Make sure the bottom doesn't burn. Transfer to a pan lined with plastic film and allow to cool. Slice and serve.

Fruit Punch

1 l pineapple-orange juice
 ¼ c rum or brandy
 1 pc apple, chopped
 1 pc orange, halved and sliced thinly

crosswise

1 can fruit cocktail

Ice

Mix all ingredients and serve.

Extras: Glazed ham, queso de bola, pan de sal, tsokolate tablea, mangga't suman

BONDING WITH THE FOLKS!

A guide to hosting a great family reunion this Christmas

No other occasion brings family and relatives (even to the nth degree!) together like Christmas. But Christmas time also can cause a lot of pressure, especially when dealing with relatives you have not met for a long time, and children who treat you like a stranger and vice versa. Here's a guide to have a closer, happier Yuletide season with the whole family:

Do some research. Before organizing a family get-together, it's best to do some pre-work. Does your Tito need a special diet and can't eat ham? How many kids does your cousin have? Will you need more kiddie treats or dishes for the grown-ups? Will you need to rent more chairs? These simple considerations are important to ensure that you make your guests feel welcome at home.

Bring out the photo album. Any photo of people in an 80s outfit may bring out the cringe factor, but believe it or not, old photos get the interest of anyone, young or old. For the older relatives, it's a way to reminisce on the good old times. For the younger kids, it's the way for them to see how you are connected to their side of the family. They'll be exclaiming "hey, this is you with my mom!" and immediately warm up to the family association.

Potluck! One way to bond with relatives you have not met for a long time is to ask them for their specialty dish. Not only will this make things easy for your budget, it also lets your Tita, Ninang or Cousin showcase her culinary pride. Other members of your family will also appreciate sampling a specialty dish they're not accustomed to, and will get the ball rolling into getting to know one another.

Serve to the shy ones first. While some relatives would attack food with gusto, older folks and small kids usually take some prodding before they head to the dinner table. Warm up to them by offering an appetizer, or by literally taking their hand and guiding them to the table. This ensures that they would get to sample every dish, even the ones that get gobbled up fast.

Ease the Tension. There's no bigger celebration pooper than having differences with other family members. Remind them that this is not the venue to settle scores, to bicker or even air the dirty laundry. So when serving to bickering relatives, make sure that you as the host, are in neutral ground. Give them both the importance, and the space, to adjust to each other. And while it is nice to think of a reconciliation (which does not always happen) the best to hope for is that a nice meal and a cold drink would cool their heads, and give them something more positive to focus on.

Pass the glass. Once you run out of things to say, you can still connect with family members by offering them a drink. True to the adage "actions speak louder than words", handing a glass of Coke lets guests feel welcome, and very much part of your family.

Bonding sa Buhay Coke Buksan Mo™



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Sunday LIFESTYLE

Capturing the Yuletide 'spirits'

IT'S A FAMILIAR SIGHT—THE influx of returning Filipino expatriates during the holidays, many of them bringing bottles of their favorite wines and spirits like Johnnie Walker and J&B whisky, Smirnoff and Ciroc vodka, Tanqueray, Baileys and others.

What most Filipinos don't know is that all those world-famous brands are manufactured by only one global firm—Diageo.

Diageo is the world's largest multinational spirits company. Its brands bring the finest beverage flavors of the West to match the

exotic delights of the East, especially during Christmas.

Celebrations like Christmas virtually unite the world in a spirit of camaraderie through Diageo's brands, whose legendary origins cover almost all corners of the globe, with Smirnoff from Moscow, Johnnie Walker from Scotland, Guinness from Dublin, Gilbey's, J&B and Tanqueray from London, Baileys from Ireland, Captain Morgan from Jamaica, and Bundaberg from Australia, to name a few.

Worldwide, five bottles of

Johnnie Walker alone are consumed every second, and around 150 million bottles are sold each year in more than 200 countries, most of which have migrant Filipinos, either onshore or offshore.

Equally global is the Diageo Company itself, which employs over 22,000 people in 80 countries worldwide, including the Philippines.

Listed in the London and New York stock exchanges, Diageo also has manufacturing facilities in Great Britain, Ireland, United States, Canada, Spain, Italy, Africa, Latin America, Australia, India, and Sta. Rosa, Laguna in the Philippines.

Quite a good number of people from these nations, in fact, come to the Philippines and celebrate Christmas with Filipinos, having learned about the bright and joyful way that the yuletide season is celebrated in this country.



Holiday drinks

SEATTLE'S BEST COFFEE (SBC) offers this holiday season Hazelnut Crème Mocha and Hazelnut Javakula made extra special with the combination of smooth coffee, chocolate, and hazelnut. You can join Seattle's Best Coffee Great Holiday Giveaway. Ask for the Great Holiday Giveaway card when you order. Collect 20 stickers and get Team Manila-designed items for free: a journal, a metal case pen, SBC mug, canvas tote, and year-round perk coupons.



Delightful beverages

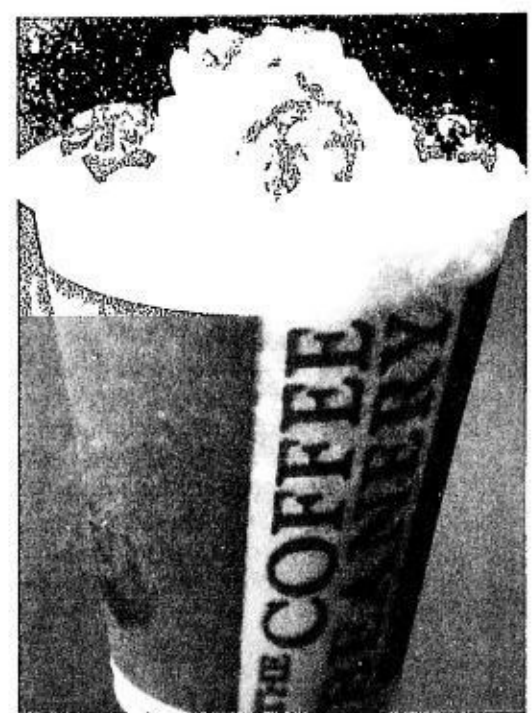
THIS MONTH, THE COFFEE BEANERY introduces Holiday Delight in time for the Christmas season. There are two new concoctions that capture merry moments with every sip created by The Coffee Beanery's award-winning baristas.

Pecan Nut Delight is a gourmet coffee drink blended with nutty flavors. It's topped with red and green glazed fruits.

There's also the Banana Java Crinkle, a java-flavored coffee drink that melds with the fruity essence of banana. This whipped delight is topped with a slice of banana and chocolate crinkle.

These delightful drinks are exclusively offered at The Coffee Beanery for the whole month of December for only P135 each. As a bonus treat, every Holiday Delight drink purchase entitles buyers to a free Tri-Isys Internet card.

The Coffee Beanery is open for franchising. Its branches are located at the 5/L, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong; Banawe Street cor. Maria Clara, Sta. Mesa Heights, QC; Unit 7 Aurora, Barangay Holy Spirit, Commonwealth, QC; Avenue Square, Naga City; Unit 9 Centro Fortuna, Mandaue City, Cebu. Call 4266681 or visit www.beanerygroup.com.



HOLIDAY Delight

Holiday buffets and packages

TRADERS HOTEL MANILA OFFERS special holiday buffets and fabulous deals.

At the Latitude restaurant, Christmas Eve Noche Buena dinner buffet and Christmas Day lunch and dinner buffets are priced at P920++ per person and include Roast Turkey with Chestnut Filling and Prime Rib. The New Year's Eve dinner buffet, at P980++, features Lamb Leg and Prime Rib with a Glass of Sparkling Wine.

The New Year Countdown at the Lobby Lounge with pica-pica buffet and two standard drinks is priced at P680++. New Year's Day lunch and dinner buffet is priced at P920++ with Prime Rib and Suckling Pig.

The hotel also has New Year holiday packages. An overnight stay in a Superior Room, including buffet breakfast and dinner for two at Latitude, a bottle of red wine and a special Christmas token, is priced at P5,000++.

An overnight stay in a room on the Traders Club floor and all the benefits extended to Traders Club guests, such as daily complimentary buffet breakfast, afternoon tea with pastries, sunset cocktails, private check-in and check-out and more, is priced at P7,000++.

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Quick Install Kit

QIK! in 3 DAYS

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PLDT myDSL QIK Crew made a quick tour around Cebu, Iloilo and Bacolod for the country's first ever driving exhibition.

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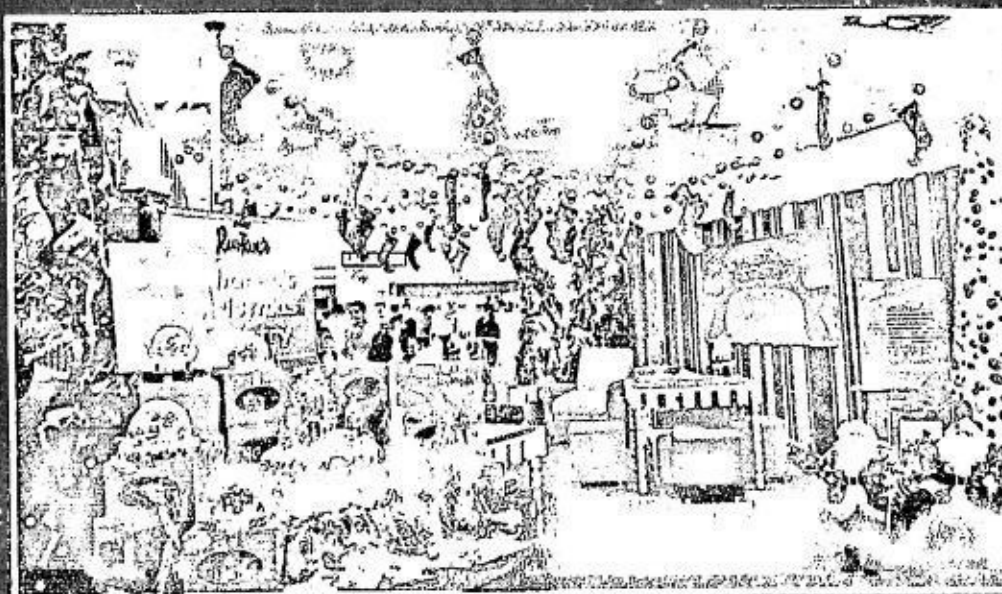
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Per DTI-MCR series no. 4395 of 2007. Promo Period: Dec. 3, 2007 to Jan. 7, 2008.



Rustan's Nena Vargas-Tantoco comes
to her own especially this Christmas



Nena's season

Text by Chelo Banal-Formoso
Photos by Romy Homillada

YOU DON'T WANT TO BE IN a department store on the days leading up to Christmas if you can help it. But Nena Vargas Tantoco has no choice. She is married to Rico Tantoco, president of Rustan's and scion of the family that has owned and run the prestigious department store for over five decades now.

As fate would have it, Nena loves working in the store, even in the middle of the frenzied holiday shopping season. The aisles are a-clutter with inventory that has to either be displayed or displaced. Sales clerks are scampering to help out customers. Personal shoppers are filling up bag after bag for VIPs who are too busy to pick out their own gifts. From these angles, Rustan's is on a roll.

"It's very exciting," says Tantoco on her

way from floor to floor, as hands-on as any boss can be. Shopping hours have been extended to midnight on Fridays and Saturdays the whole month of December.

"It's been very good for us," she adds. "We have music and even food for late-night shoppers."

Hallmarks

Nena Tantoco is Special Assistant to the President and head of the Visuals & Merchandising Department (VMD) around Rustan's. As in other companies, folks there sail through the day-to-day on acronyms; Nena's is NVT).

The window display happens to be one of the hallmarks of Rustan's, the country's only top-tier department store. Another is the merchandise selection that is mostly exclusive, luxury and branded. Both the displays and merchandising are doing well under NVT's guidance.

Nena was not part of the retail business in the beginning of her marriage to Rico. She had her own home business. Have you heard of the Vargas cake from Forbes Park?

"That's us," says Nena. Her sister Inday Javellana ran the business side. And it was Nena who perfected the recipes with mom Carmen, including the incomparable one for the Vargas Brazo de Mercedes. Today, third-generation Vargases are running the kitchen.

Nena recalls how whenever her mother-in-law would visit and notice the beautiful

SANTA welcome here: there's nothing like the children's section at Rustan's flagship store in Makati; (above left) NVT at the home section

touches around the house, she would say Nena should develop a gift for decorating. "My mother-in-law would say, don't just keep it within the home, use it in the store," recalls Nena.

By store, Glecly Tantoco had meant Rustan's/G2

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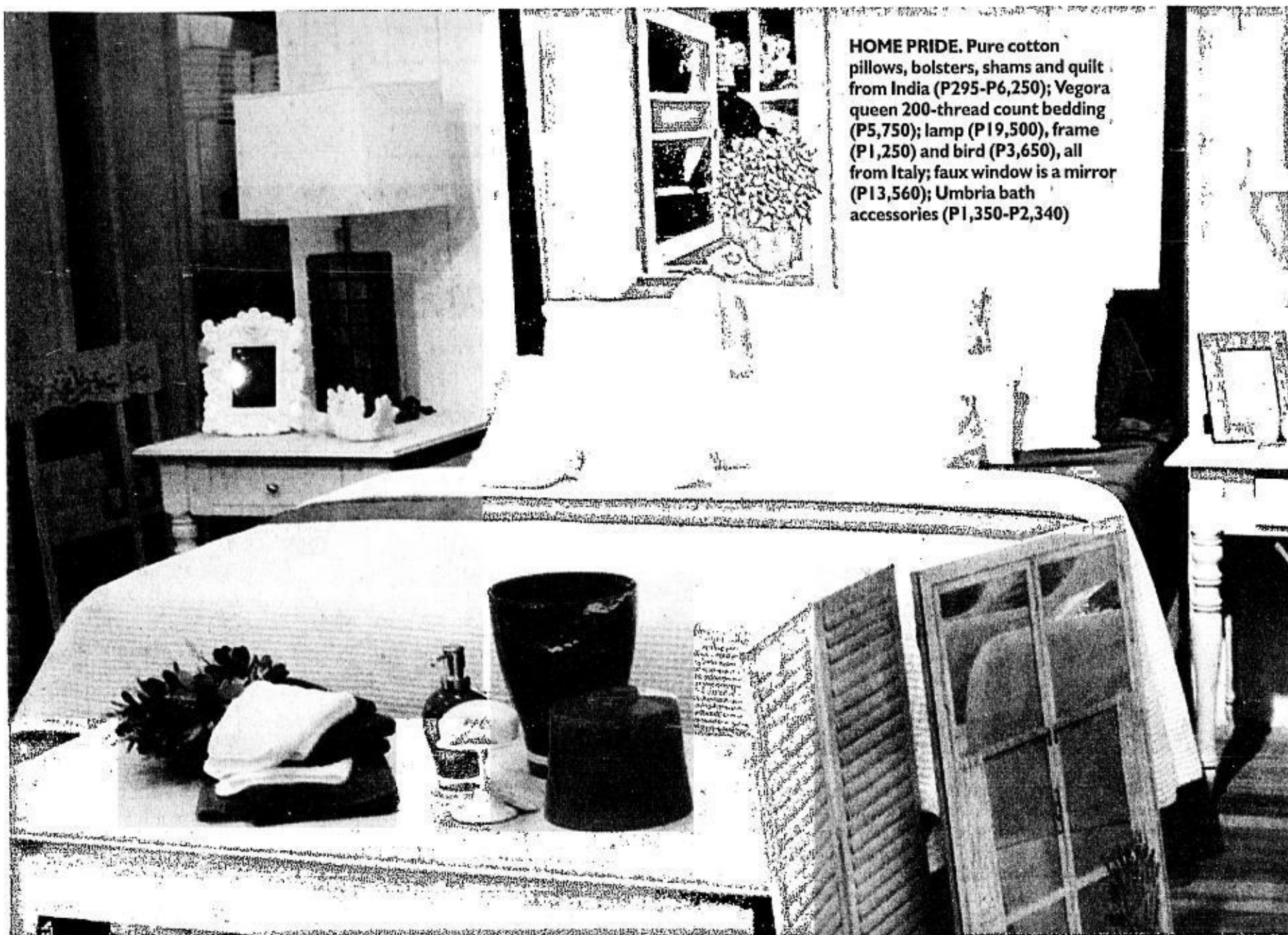


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TANTOCO stops to add finishing touches to a table setting in the home section.



EXPORT-QUALITY products from local sources include silver or black sequined frames (P699.75-P1,109.75); lined gift boxes (P1,179.75-P1,564.75); napkin rings (P119.75); journal (P599.75)

Nena's season

From page G1

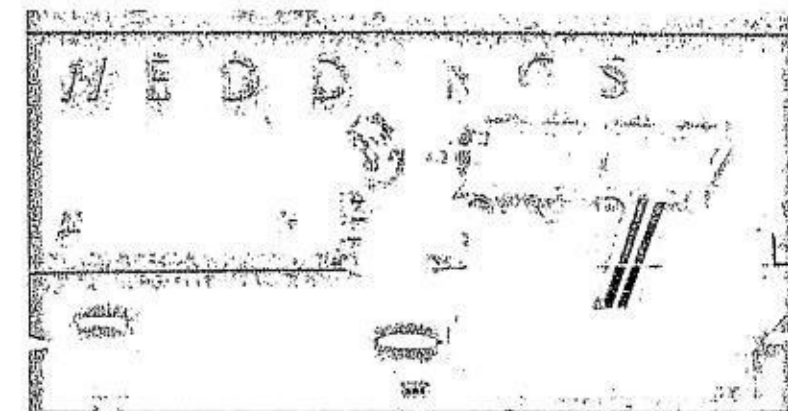
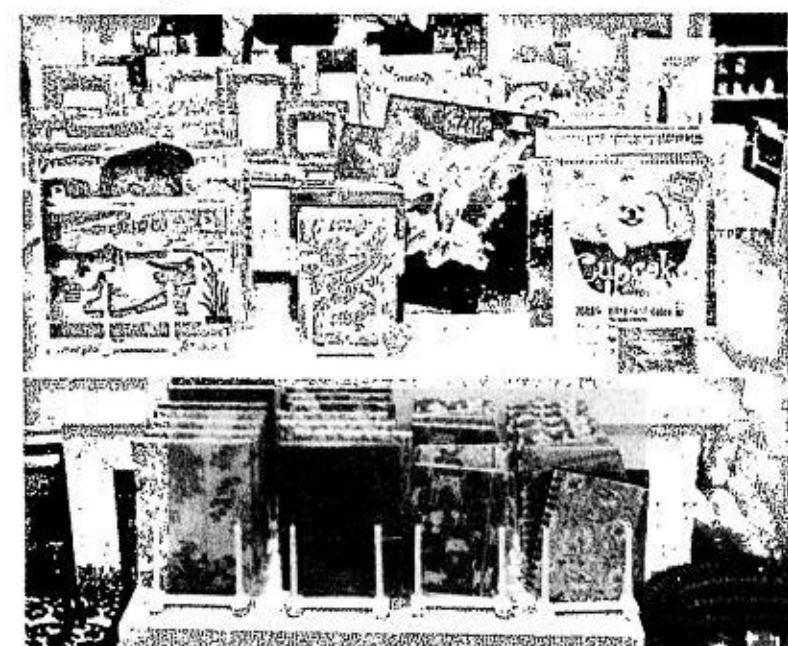
tan's, of course, the one-stop shop she opened in 1952 and grew with husband Bi-venido into a high-end shopping destination.

Toughened up

One day Glecly asked Nena to help with the Rustan's flower shop and that started the daughter-in-law's career in retail.

"My mom and my mother-in-law taught me a lot," says NVT. "My mom was soft. My mother-in-law was the empowering one. She was inspiring, but also tough. *Ang daming takot sa kanya. I am Visayan. 'Di ba malambot?* She toughened me. She did

THE GIFT shop on the fourth floor carries all kinds of cherishables, from journals to shopping bags to fabric-covered nesting boxes.



TANTOCO leads the way to Weddings and Beyond, the wedding registry at Rustan's that, again, is not just a desk but an honest-to-goodness room where future brides and grooms can have breathing space and register their gift choices away from the hustle and bustle of shopping activities.



CANDELABRA from Italy depicting the Nativity scene makes for an elegant gift and according to NVT, is so Rustan's. Since she says the giving is what energizes the Christmas season, she invites one and all to come to Rustan's with their loved ones' wish lists."



WITH Criselda Lontok, who started in Rustan's as an in-store designer 34 years ago and eventually came out with her own RTW label sold exclusively at Rustan's. "She's not just loyal, she's committed," says Tantoco.



ANOTHER exclusive at Rustan's is the Multiple Choice chinaware that come in pristine white and candy colors.



BREASTFEEDING is taken seriously at Rustan's where they don't just give moms a seat in the women's room but an entire tastefully furnished room for the relaxation and pleasure of both mother and baby.

RISELDA LONTOK

make me cry sometimes, but it was very good training."

Even in Hong Kong, where Rico moved his family after the EDSA revolution of 1986, Nena continued the flower business, goaded on by a mother-in-law who would not be discouraged by language problems.

"We called the flower shop Expressions. It was still a part of Rustan's. I decorated all the hotels. It was quite an experience," recalls Nena.

Today, NVT is not just with the flower shop but all over Rustan's. Her VMD team's most recent coup is the Christmas window display.

Her son Joel, she says, is the inspiration for "Awaken the child in you," Rustan's holiday theme and sales campaign this year.

"This is actually our second Christmas without Joel," says Nena. "He also wasn't with us last year. He was young and single; we didn't see much of him. He wanted to live his life his way. In the middle of last year, he left the company because he felt he wasn't growing. He said he needed to find himself."

In Nena's recollection, Joel came to see his *manong* Donnie on Dec. 28 and talked about coming back. Ten days later, he was found dead in a friend's apartment.

A son in heaven

Since this is a society that always blames the mother when a child's life goes awry, there was some judgmental and unflattering talk about Nena in the aftermath of Joel's death. But thanks to family support, an unshakable faith and a wonderful centering prayer from her spiritual guide, Nena is able to talk about Joel now without remorse or anger or sadness, only with acceptance.

When asked how many children she has, she answers, "Seven, one in heaven."

Of the remaining six, five are actively involved in the retail business. One daughter has chosen to focus on teaching.

Eldest son Donnie runs the Shopwise supermarket chain with his wife Crickette. The couple have recently taken over Rustan's supermarket as well.

Another son, Paolo, is arriving from the United States soon with his wife Dina to join Rustan's.

Daughter Katrina and daughter-in-law Hindy are designing a children's line, which is perfect for two women who have recently become mothers and added two to the Tantocos' six grandchildren.

The new kiddie collection will be on the third floor, the entirety of which is devoted

to children, complete with a refreshment kiosk, a play area and a breastfeeding room. You can't beat the Rustan's children's section on any day, more so during the holiday season. Right now, it is all done up in the happy colors of Christmas.

NVT's pride and joy, however, is the home floor on the fourth, especially the bed and bath section that carries branded bedding and fine bath furnishings. The floor also houses Rustan's hotel line, a gift shop that is chockfull of cute choices and rare finds, a kitchen section and a Filipiniana section. Rustan's is able to tap exclusive local sources for export-quality table linens, picture frames and other home accessories.

Completing the home floor is the Weddings and Beyond room, a spacious, comfortable place where engaged couples can take a breather and register their wedding gift selections in peace.

NVT points to a spot on the fifth that is being transformed into a music place for men who are waiting for the women in their lives who are shopping.

The new section, the recently refurbished areas and the new international labels are all part of the makeover that Rustan's is undergoing to regain its old glory.

After all, the competition is right around the corner. A department store called Adora will be anchoring Greenbelt 5 soon. The funny thing is, its owner is Marilou Pineda, one of Rico's five sisters.

It is a sad turn of events but, as Nena says, "I'm just an in-law and all I can do is move forward." That's the direction that Rustan's seems to be taking as well. It has gone through seasons where it seemed to have been snoozing but, of late, it has added more desirable designer and private label products at its flagship store on Ayala Avenue and branches in Shangri-la Mall, Gateway and Alabang.

"We want to keep our shoppers interested," says NVT. "People have been telling us to keep the momentum. We just have to work very, very hard to keep it going."

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MILA Royo Soreach (right) with Amparito Llamas Lhuillier and Julina Pando Muertegui



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Cebu women's sweet charity

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SOME OF THE MOST PROMINENT LADIES in Cebu belong to the St. Joseph Foundation.

The organization is involved in charity and civic projects like feeding programs, scholarships for poor students and, most of all, a livelihood program for housewives. Even some husbands have also taken up crocheting, finding it a lucrative way to earn an honest living.

The St. Joseph Crochet program churns out some really beautiful products, highly rated by the discerning.

The whole range is on display, and for sale, in a shop at the home of Enrique and Lulu Aboitiz along Bauhinia Drive. The store keeps regular office hours and there is always a steady stream of shoppers, their cars lining the adjacent sidewalk.

President of the St. Joseph Foundation is Amelia "Mem" Castillo La O, with Lourdes Ferrer Marquez as vice president; Ma. Lourdes Mendieta de Aboitiz, treasurer; and Cristina Cruz Ebrada, secretary.



ST. JOSEPH Foundation president Mem La O

The roster of members reads like Cebu's social register. Every year the foundation spearheads a fundraiser, alternating between a concert and a Christmas bake sale or bazaar.

This year it had a bake sale at the Ayala Center Cebu. Much ahead of opening time—10 a.m.—the ladies were already all there, garbed in colorful and festive aprons with Christmas prints.

Brisk sales

Thirty minutes into the bake sale, Maricar Longa Mendezona's pili puddings were all gone. No surprise since they have the texture of marzipan.

"I have other delights," offered Maricar behind the counter. "Maybe if you come back in the afternoon," she consoled some.

Annie Osmeña Aboitiz sent jars of her famous mango jam, displayed near the cash register handled by Maribel Ayasa Antunez. "Buy them," Maribel encouraged those who were paying or waiting for change. "No preservatives." They were soon sold out.

Amparito Llamas Lhuillier entered with a golden bell in her hand, ringing it to attract more customers. She is magnetic enough, even without a bell. There was Mila Royo Soreach coming to her, gasping, "I'll buy, I'll buy, anything..."

Mem L. stood close to Julina Pando Muertegui who was dispensing packages of Spanish chorizos made by Carmen Muertegui. It was not even 11 a.m. but Julina said, "There's only one pack left."

Amparito, passing by with her bell, quickly told her, "That's for me."

Hazel Graham Gonzalez arrived close to lunchtime and was amused that the St. Joseph ladies turned out to be their own best customers. Hazel arrived at the right moment, bringing her famous Beehive sandwiches of asparagus, diced chicken, and other magical ingredients. Everyone at the counters munched on them.

Bake sale was supposed to be from 10 a.m. up to the time Ayala Center closed. But by mid-afternoon the goodies were wiped out.

The ladies cleared the stalls, returned home with a wondrous sense of accomplishment and, days later, held a celebration for the success of it all. What next?

There was a clamor for a show in 2008. In 2004, the foundation filled the Casino Español ballroom to its 700-person capacity for a memorable show by Pilita Corrales.

In 2006, at the same venue, it scored another hit with José Mari Chan's Christmas special.

"Maybe we should put Pilita and José Mari in one show," Mem suggested.

Both celebrity performers donated their services to the noble cause of the St. Joseph Foundation, and both also said to count on them in the future. Now's the time to plan and lay the groundwork.

Time does fly, and there are people in need. There are also people with kind hearts who are ready to share their bounty, knowing that a great job is being done by the St. Joseph Foundation of Cebu.

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INSIDE

■ **'Bad Boy' Robin Padilla bares all for Take Five, talking about prison life, brother Rustom, and three of his tattoos (at left—look very closely) /H2**

■ **Celebutante finds her beau is a wolf in sheep's clothing Rushes /J4**

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SMART
THE POWER TO LEAD

By Bayani San Diego Jr. and the INQUIRER Entertainment Staff

Photos by Rodel Rotoni

IF HIS LIFE STORY WERE TO BE divided in chapters, the years he turned 18, 28 and 38 would be particularly crucial.

What were the chances? A few days after this interview, the Bad Boy of Philippine movies was turning 38! Could be the reason that he was waxing nostalgic.

Or, perhaps, being a child of the movies, he just couldn't help telling stories in cinematic terms.

He recounted that he was 18 when his father, actor-director-producer and Camarines Norte Gov. Roy Padilla, was assassinated. The incident had started his downward spiral, his walk on the wild side.

At age 28, he had just emerged from three years of incarceration in the national penitentiary in Muntinlupa.

Prison life, which he described as "heaven"—maybe in jest, we couldn't tell—was also quite hellish, in fact, based on the grisly details that he recalled with candor.

Now, at 38, he is once again at a crossroads.

He just began shooting a movie, "Ikaw Pa Rin," for Viva with Ai-Ai de las Alas, and a new teleserye, "Joaquin Bordado," for GMA 7 with Iza Calzado.

A Carlo J. Caparas creation, Joaquin Bordado is a "marked man," his body studded with skin art. The real Robin sports a few tattoos himself.

Each one tells a story, according to his manager, Betchay Vidanes.

There's a heart dedicated to his wife, Liezl Sicangco-Padilla. Another depicts the helicopter scene from "Miss Saigon," from the time he was doing "Bad Boy 2" with Monique Wilson, an original cast member of West End's "Miss Saigon."

And there's that other one on his chest, "the most painful," he remarked. It bears the name of a woman whom he mentions in this frank exchange, the one that got away and married a Senator.

What is your training for "Joaquin Bordado" like?

Sa ngayon, pang-walong linggo na ng training ko, mula alas-8 ng umaga hanggang alas-8 ng gabi. Iba po ang training kasi may weight requirement 'yung role. Kailangan po nakahubad lagi.

Ang hirap lang, malakas akong kumain. Ang kinakain ko ngayon literal na hindi pagkain. Pag gising sa umaga, isang tablespoon ng wild honey.

It has to be wild honey?

Kailangan pareho ko, wild! Kailangan ng honey bago ako mag-cardio [workout] ng two hours. Tapos, treadmill ng two hours din. Saka lang ako puwedeng mag-oatmeal. Bine-blender 'yon kasama ng banana, keso, tofu, soya milk. That's my

breakfast. Pagkatapos no'n magbubuhay ako ng barbell.

Who prepares your meals?

Ako lang. But when I was in Australia, my wife. Doon ako nag-train ng apat na linggo. Tinuloy ko na lang dito.

What do you have for lunch?

Ulit lang po 'yon. Kasi tuwing apat na oras dapat kumakain ako. Maliit (na portions), pero kailangan nasa oras, kasi ba-ka magka-ulcer.

Which food do you miss the most?

Beef lover ako e. Puwedeng mag-turkey, pero sa gabi lang, at sukát din.

Rice?

Bawal din po. Nami-miss ko rin ang rice.

How do you stick to that regimen?

Binobola ko po 'yung sarili ko. Pag low morale ako, humaharap ako sa salamin. Sinasabi ko, "Ganda!" 'Yon na lang ang konsuelo ko.

How much weight have you lost so far?

From 178, 158 pounds na ako ngayon. Pero kailangang mabawasan pa ako ng 8 pounds. Kailangan 150 para makalipad

nang hindi kailangan ng kable (harness). Marami kasing mga pekeng artista na gumagamit ng kable. Ayoko no'n. Nu'ng 170 lbs. nga ako, nagawa ko 'yun sa "Asian Treasures." Ayoko kasing magpatalo sa mga foreigner.

How high can you fly?

Mga 6 feet, talón.

Why are you into action roles these days?

Hindi naman po kasi ako bagay doon sa pampa-pogi. Hindi ako matinee idol.

Why do you feel you have to physically transform yourself in each new role?

In [the film] "Blackout," nagpataba ako. Para sa akin kasi mas madaling gampanan ang role ... Hindi mo lang siya pine-

'Kailangan 100 percent ang attention sa leading lady. 'Pag may asawa, 25 percent na lang, tinatanong na lang kung kumain na, 'di na ikaw ang bumibili ng pagkain.'

'Bad Boy'

... down to his diet, tattoos, romance and acting secrets, memories of prison life, relationship with brother Rustom



ROBIN Padilla gets candid and intimate as he discusses crucial chapters in his storied life.

play, ikaw na talaga 'yung character.

So while doing "Blackout," you stopped bathing?

Saka doon ako tumira sa location (a dilapidated apartment) for one week.

How did you gain weight for that?

Puro rice, spaghetti, strawberry jam.

After doing action fantaseries, will we see you again in movies like "La Visa Loca" and "Blackout"?

'Yung mga ibang klaseng pelikula, 'yong mga pelikula na gusto kong gawin, hindi ako nababayaran doon!

Ang ginagawa po namin, sharing pag kumita. Sa kabutihang palad, hindi 'ata nakabawi. Ang konsuelo na lang namin pag nagugustuhan ang trabaho namin. 'Yun ang nakakataba ng puso.

Do you regret doing those films na walang bayad?

Hindi po! Kasi outlet din 'yun ng kabaliwan. Doon mo nailalabas ang hindi mo mailabas, lalo na pag sa comedy.

Are you funny in real life?

Komedyante po ako e. Ayoko po ng problema. Kaya lang ang mga taga-hanga ko kasi mga maton. Ang gusto nila, bak-bakan.

But after a certain age, you can't do action films, right?

Hindi po ako naniniwala sa edad e. Kanina kausap ko si Roda (his sister). Sabi niya: "Pag nag-asawa na ang mga dalaga mo, magiging lolo ka na." Sabi ko naman: "Wala naman sa edad 'yon."

Mahirap lang maging maton, pag malaki ang tiyan mo. Ang pagiging action star, nasa hitsura at pangangatawan. Parang si Clint Eastwood, kapani-paniwala na boxing coach siya sa "Million Dollar Baby," 'di ba?

Masarap gumawa ng action, pero gusto ko pa rin ng mga love story. Ibang klaseng therapy din 'yun.

Didn't you get in trouble when you said the best part in doing romantic-comedies was that you get to kiss the leading lady?

Ay, totoo naman po 'yun. Sinasabi ko lang ang nasa loob ko. Lalake po ako. Siyempre masarap 'yon.

Would you ever make a "Brokeback Mountain" type of movie?

No! Si Rustom (Padilla, his brother) na lang po. Hindi ko po kaya 'yon. Medyo matindi po 'yon.

Will your movie with brothers Rustom, Royet and Rommel push through?

Opo. Ang producer namin, si Rema (his sister). Baka si Joyce Bernal ang mag-direk.

Would your mom (Eva Cariño) do a cameo?

Mmm. Magkamukha na nga sila ni Rustom ngayon!

How's your relationship with Rustom (since he came out as a gay man)?

Mahal na mahal ko po si Rustom. Punong-puno nga kami ng interes kay Rustom ngayon dahil parang nagkaroon kami ng bagong kapatid.

Is it true that you're overprotective of Rustom?

Siyempre naman. Ang alam ko, lahat kami may asawa na, tapos biglang may isang dalaga kami ulit. Napakalaking responsibilidad ang pinili niyang kasarian. Kung hindi siya artista, pababayaan namin siya. Pero kasi nga artista siya, bawa't kilos niya, maaaring sundin o gayahin.

Is it okay with you that he came out?

Doon po siya masaya e. Ayoko namang nagmamaton-maton siya tapos umiiyak siya sa gabi. Mahirap 'yun.

Minsan nga, sinisisi ko ang sarili ko. Ako ang nagsabi sa kanya na mag-aral sa America. Doon niya yata nakita ang kalayaan. Pero okay lang, ang importante, masaya siya. Hindi ko pa nakitang ganoon kasaya si Rustom sa buong buhay niya.

Are your other siblings just as open-minded about Rustom?

Wala naman pong kumontra. Nabigla kami, pero nakita namin ang ibang liwanag sa mukha ni Rustom ngayon.

Kaya ako naging tarantado dahil sa kanya. Noong bata pa kami, pag tinutukso siya, ako ang nagre-react. Sa dami ng away, na-kick out ako sa school.

Sa kabilang banda, parang pareho kami na-release. Nagkaroon din ako ng kapayapaan sa isip. Ngayon natanggap ko na. Kailangan ko yatang puntahan lahat nang inaway ko no'n, at humingi ng paumanhin.

You mentioned your daughters Queenie (16) and Kylie (14). Are you worried about them falling in love?

Hindi naman po. Kasama naman 'yan sa buhay. Kaya lang, iba ang religion namin. Importante na sumunod sila sa kulturang Muslim.

But you allowed them to join show biz?

Gusto nila e. Pero para sa akin napakasagrado ng salitang artista. Dahil gusto nilang maging artista, dapat maging mabuting halimbawa sila.

Will you allow them to be part of a love team?

Wala namang problema 'yun, pero may limitasyon siyempre. Bawal ang halikan.

They're also into action? You prefer that they become action stars?

Opo. Mga bata pa sila, sumasabay na sila sa training ko ng muay Thai. Hanggang sa nagkaroon na sila ng interes. Ngayon, lumaban at nagwagi pa sila sa Thailand at Pilipinas. At hindi lang muay Thai ang alam nila. Marunong din sila ng arnis, sword, boxing, judo...

You seem very proud of them.

Aba, siyempre po. Pero kinakabahan ako. Noong napanood ko sila [minsan], ako ang nag-panic.

Are your other kids also interested in

acting?

Si Zherileen (13).

How about your you

Pag nakikita niy katawan ko, pag nilalang liniment ang likod ni Alih: "Don't worry up, I'll become a sup retire!"

You're now 38. What between Robin at 38

Sa maraming bag Kalalabas ko pa lang 28 ako.

Let's go back further

Those were my wild Noong nakulong nam lagang heaven 'yung na buwan ko sa loob. life. Ang katawan k ang spirit ko ... wow!

Sabi ng asawa ko, n guwapo. At kahit w malakas ang katawa nasa likod ko ang Diy

Ako lang 'ata ang long na walang body. Jalojos at (Hubert) V Parang longganisa p tong-dugtong.

But you met friend

put their lives on the Meron po. Sigur akong makisama. K doon sa mga bodygu mo.

Kasi po ang mga pinapakain mo. Binib araw. Ako, wala no mag-isa ang pamilya nambastos ng asawa pumarehas ako sa loob ng VIP treatment.

But was special tre

you? Hindi naman po: gusto mong maging ng bodyguard. Bibili pahan mo ng P5,00 apartment. 'Yan ang ruled 'yan by gangs.

Were you invited to

Maraming nagsas

Is it possible to say

Ang sabi ko po noon hindi para magpaka lungan ako para bum

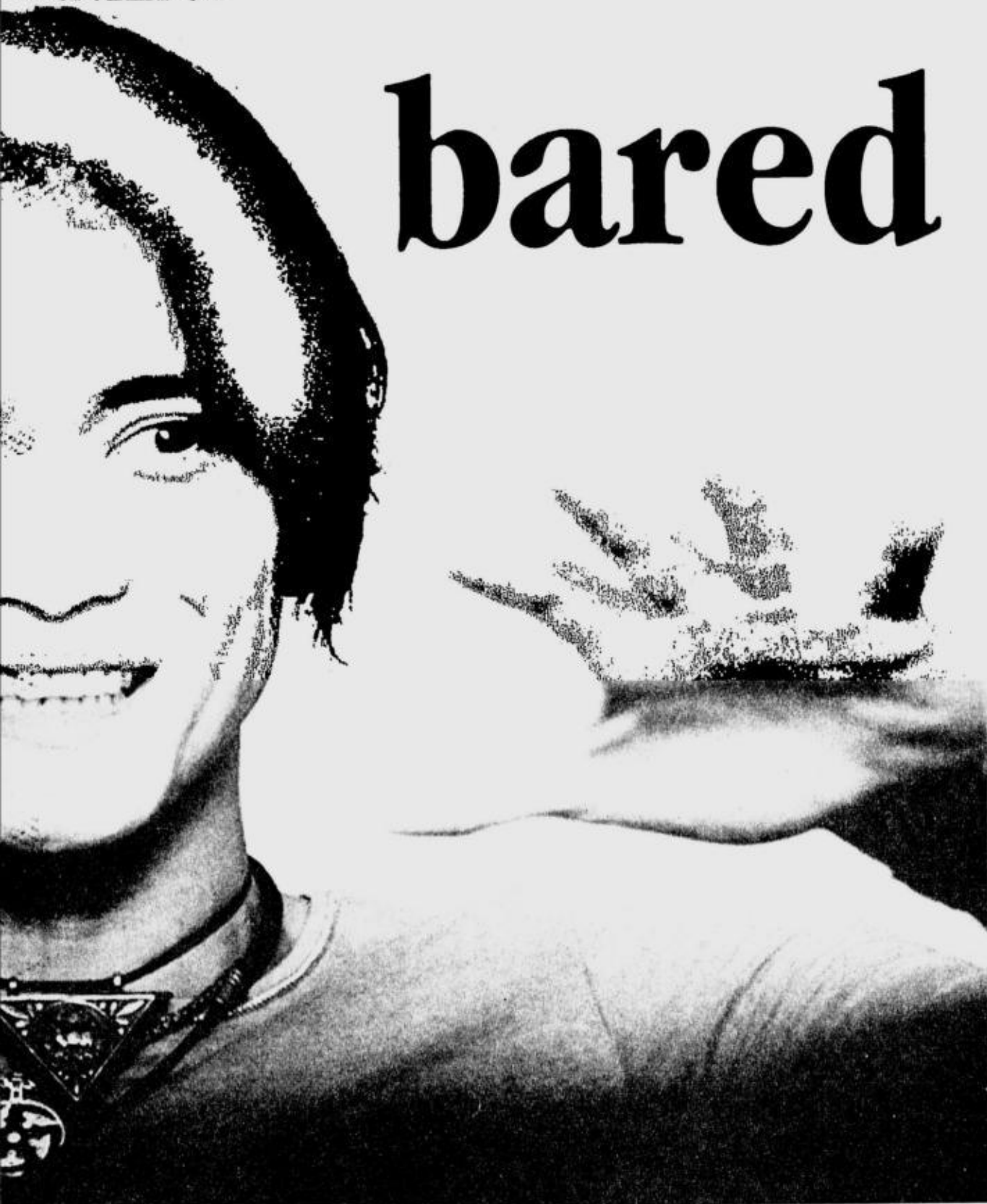
Nirespeto ako ng m ban ko na maayos a Doon kasi, may bo pagkain sa selda. u

natitira sa mga tug ang tawag sa mgu ta na lang. Nakakaawa.

Noong nakita ko tama 'to. Dapat panta ko si Gen. (Vicente)

niya parang sa Ame tray na ang pagkain.

Didn't anyone min



bared

gownup?

Lalo ngang tumitindi e.

You said you're not the matinee idol type, but why do women love you?
Makulit lang po ako siguro.

They say you're very *maalaga* on the set?

Siguro kasi 'yon ang lagi kong naririnig sa tatay ko noong araw. Masyadong mabait sa babae si Papa! Sabi nila 72 kam-ing magkakapatid.

How many mothers?

Mga 14. Sabi sa amin ni Mama: "Kasi ang tatay n'yo, mabait, mapagmahal, mapagbigay." Siguro 'yon ang napasok sa isip namin.

Genetic programming?

Siguro po. Tinanong namin si Mama: "Bakit ang daming asawa ni Papa?" Sabi niya: "Hindi n'yo pa maiintindihan ... pero parang Trip to Jerusalem 'yan. Ayaw ni Papa na may mawalan ng upuan." Gusto niya lahat masaya.

You asked your mom about it?

Kasi nagtataka kami dahil tuwing bakasyon, iniikot kami ng tatay ko sa iba't ibang lugar para makilala ang ibang kapatid namin. Halimbawa, dinala kami sa Bicol para makasama 'yung stepmom at mga kapatid namin doon. Meron din kam-ing mga nakilala lang nu'ng namatay na ang Papa ko. Dumating 'yung mga taga-ibang bansa sa lamay.

How old were you when he died?

I was 18. Noon ako nag-wild e. Na-assassinate kasi ang tatay ko. Noon din ako nag-umpisang magdala ng baril. Gusto kaming ubusin e. Pagkatapos niya, 'yong kapatid ko naman. Iba ang psychological effect sa amin.

Let's go back to women. When do you decide that you're interested in your partner? Is that a factor in accepting a role?

Kasama po 'yun. Kailangan 100 percent ng attention sa leading lady ko.

Was there ever a time you found it hard to give 100 percent?

Wala naman po. Basta dalaga, ayos. Huwag lang may asawa. Tulad ni Sharon (Cuneta). May asawa na; senador pa. Naku, mahirap 'yon. Hindi mo magawa ang dapat. Pag ganoon, 25 percent na lang. Tinatanong mo na lang kung kumain

na. Hindi na ikaw ang bibili ng pagkain.

What about Regine Velasquez? She already had Ogie Alcasid when you shot "Till I Met You"?
Boyfriend pa lang 'yun! (Laughs.)

Was there ever a leading lady that resisted your charms?

Kasi ako, sinasabi ko naman po agad 'yon e. Sa meeting pa lang sinasabi na ng manager ko sa manager niya na kailangan marunong kang lumaro. Kasi kung wala 'yung chemistry, huwag na tayong gumawa ng love story. Parang niloloko natin ang mga tao.

Wala namang physical contact na matindi. Puro landian lang naman! (Laughs.)

Pero siyempre may mga limitasyon. May mga lugar na hindi mo puwedeng hawakan. Meron mga bagay na hindi mo puwedeng sabihin. Kasi pag sinabi mong mahal kita, tapos na 'yon. Lumalabas ka na do'n sa pinag-usapan.

It may be clear to you, but what if the girl gets confused?

Dapat walang malito. Saka derecho po agad. Pag nalilito ka na, sabihin mo na.

Has that ever happened to you?

Nagpapasalamat naman ako at hindi pa. Para lang po kasi maging totoo sa screen.

Method acting? Is it automatic that, after the project, it's over?

Opo, automatic 'yun. Kasi pag medyo hindi ka na makatulog, pag nasa isip mo na siya ... naku, patay.

That's the warning sign?

Warning na 'yan. Ibig sabihin nade-develop ka na.

In "Joaquin Bordado," you're sporting lots of tattoos. How many of your tattoos are real?

Siyam. Pero wala akong tattoo na gawa sa Bilibid. Hindi na ako puwedeng magpadagdag ng totoong tattoo. Bawal sa mga Muslim. Kaya sa "Bordado," Pentel Pen lang ang ginagamit. Alcohol lang, tanggal na.

Among your real tattoos, what was the most painful to do?

Ito ang pinakamasakit. (Points to chest.) Kasi, habang tina-tatoo 'yun, in love na in love ako e.

modeling ang trip.

ngest, Alih (7)?
ang masakit ang
ngyan ng Mama niya
ko, laging sinasabi
Papa. When I grow
erstar and you can

at's the difference
and Robin at 28?
ay, pareho pa rin.
ng-kulungan noong

t. Robin at 18?
l days. Barkadahan.
in ako (at 25) ... ta-
atlong taon at apat
The best days of my
nakakulong, pero

on daw ako pinaka-
ala akong ensayo,
n ko dahil alam ko
s.
(celebrity) nakaku-
guard. Sina (Romy)
Webb, may 10 alalay.
ng naglalakad. Dug-

s there who would
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o dahil marunong
si iba naman sila
ard, na pinapa-papa

bodyguard sa loob,
ngyan ng P100 isang
n. Sinusundo ko ng
ko sa gate at walang
ko sa loob. Kasi
o. Hindi ako humingi

atment offered to

asa iyo 'yun. Kung
IP, kukuha ka agad
ka ng lugar mo—uu-
a month. Parang
alakaran sa loob ...

oin'a gang?

oi ...

o to a gang?

n: Nangulungan ako,
dalubhasa. Nangu-
ulik sa Diyos.

ga tao doon. Pinagla-
ng pagkain namin.
s. Pag dinala ang
ahin ang boss. Ang
tabing-dagat, 'yon
ga-probinsiya, buto

yon, sabi ko, hindi
y-pantay. Kinausap
inarao. Ang ginawa
ica. Ngayon, naka-

l that you tried to

['The worst feeling
when I was in jail],
useless ako...Parang
dinala ako sa
pinakamataas,
naging superstar. Sa
loob, lowest
mammal ako.
Parang baka,
bibilangin, tapos
itatago...']

change the system?

Noong una, madami. Madami po talaga.

Kasi pati drugs kinalaban ko.

Pagpasok ko, heavy user ako. May nag-offer sa akin ng bato (shabu). Sabi ko, hindi ako nagbabato—heroin at Demerol lang. After two days, may nag-offer na ng heroin at Demerol.

Ang laking pagsubok po. Ang ginawa ko, hinanap ko 'yung mga matitino sa loob. 'Yung mga dating NPA (New People's Army), 'yung mga katutubo na aktibista. Sa kanila ako sumama.

Ang pinaglalaban nila, pagandahin ang sistema sa bilibid. Dati kaaway nila si Gen. Vinarao. Ang ginawa ko, pinagbati ko sila. Tapos naayos 'yung pagkain, 'yung problema sa drugs. Nakapagpatayo kami ng [rehab] center sa loob.

There were drug syndicates in prison?

Marami pong natanggal na guwardiya noon.

Noong una, nilagay po ako sa barangay tanod dahil nagte-train ako ng arnis. Habang nagtuturo ako ng arnis, nagkagulo. Doon sa loob, pag nagkagulo, akala mo may earthquake sa lakas ng tunog ng takbuan. Pagkatapos ng gulo, ang daming tsinelas na natiwan doon sa plaza!

Ako ang nangunguna noon sa takbuan. Ang bilis ko! Sa isip ko, pag sumali ako sa gulo at nakapalo ako, lalong tatagal ang sentensiya ko. Kaya 'yong bilis ko ng takbo, 'yon din ang bilis ng pagbagal ko.

Hindi ako sumali sa gulo. 'Yung mga tirador, 'yung mga nananaksak, meron silang tinatawag na librong itim. Nandoon sa libro kung anong parte ng katawan ang dapat saksakin para mabilis ang pagpatay.

'Yun po ang naabutan ko na pinilit nam-ing baguhin.

Sa loob, pag mahirap ka, dalawa lang

ang pagpipilian mo: bestida o panaksak. Sa Diyos po ako pumunta.

No'ng panahon namin, pinag-usap namin ang mga gang, pinilit naming baguhin ang sitwasyon. Kung titingnan n'yo ang records, walang gulo sa Bilibid noon.

If there's no trouble, conditions improve?

Siyempre po. Pasok ang dalaw. 'Yun ang incentive. Pati po 'yung sodomy nawala, kasi may dalaw na ng mga asawang babae. May conjugal visit na.

Have you gone back to visit Muntinlupa?

Opo. Nag-shooting ako doon ng "Hari ng Selda." Hindi ko sila kinakalimutan.

You can make a movie based on your life in jail.

Noong nandoon ako, meron akong diary.

Noong una akong dumating doon, ang sabi ko hindi ako mababago nito. Iba ang hitsura ng Bilibid noon. May tumatalon mula third floor, una ulo. Sana kung patay. Nababali lang ang buto. Nangingisay. Bad trip. Talagang na-shock ako.

What was the worst feeling when you were in jail?

Na useless ako. 'Yun ang pinakamatin-di. Nakakulong ako, tapos nakikita ko na ang daming problema ng asawa ko, ng mga anak ko. Tapos wala akong magawa.

'Yon ang time na kinuha si Liezl ng nanay niya at dinala sa Australia. Wala akong nagawa. Wala akong pera e.

Parang dinala ako sa pinaka-mataas, naging superstar. Tapos sa loob, lowest mammal ako. Parang baka. Bibilangin tapos itatago. 'Yon ang pinakamasakit sa akin.

But you didn't give up.

Hindi. Dalawang buwan na depression lang 'yun. Noong pangatlong buwan, nakita ko na ang wisdom sa loob. Alam ko na meron akong dapat gawin na makabuluhan sa loob.

You met good friends inside?

'Yung grupo ko. Hanggang ngayon kasama ko sila. Apat sila. Si Rodolfo Bernardo, dating New People's Army. Siya na ang administrator ng foundation ko, Liwanag ng Kapayaan. Sina Mario Castillo at Joel Rascon, bodyguard ng mga anak ko. Si Juniper Dominguez, dinadalaw-dalaw kami. Sa loob, ang daming pinaglaban ni Juniper. Ngayon, pinagpatuloy niya ang laban sa Mountain Province.

You said Liezl was happiest when you were in prison. How's she now?

Okay lang po. Financially, masaya siya. Pero tungkol sa aming dalawa, hindi po ...

Because you're far apart?

Isa 'yun.

Does she still get jealous?

Hindi naman mawawala 'yun.

Even if your daughters are now



BURNS AND ALL.
From 178 lbs, he is down to 158 and has to lose 8 more for his role in a new 'teleserye' with Iza Calzado on GMA 7.

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sparks of passion

Bonifacio

Nicole Kidman, other stars reveal Christmas plans



NICOLE Kidman loves the anticipation. REUTERS

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD



Ruben V. Nepales

LOS ANGELES—Ryan Cayabyab's "Pasko I and II" CDs are on shuffle play on our home stereo. The Christmas tree lights seem to be flashing to the San Miguel Philharmonic Orchestra and Master Chorale's glorious version of "Ang Pasko Ay Sumapit." There's a queso de bola (a gift from a friend back

home) in the fridge, waiting to be devoured come *noche buena* time.

It could mean only one thing: it's time to write our Christmas column and wish one and all happy holidays!

Let's start with Nicole Kidman, one of the stars asked about Christmas in our press cons. "I'm one of those people who love the anticipation of Christmas," she said in our London interview for "The Golden Compass." "I remember as a kid sneaking down at night to see the presents under the tree and the lights. I still do that in our house. What I do when I get back to Sydney is put all the fairy lights up. We have the tree. I love to embrace the magic of Christmas. There's a fantasy quality attached to it."

The actress, married to fellow Australian, country singer Keith Urban, revealed that she will spend the holidays "with my husband's family, my sister and all of her kids, my family as well as aunts and uncles. There will be a lot of food."

She added, "My sister does a lot of the cooking. We do a Christmas party on the 23rd (today, Sunday). We go to church. On Christmas Day, we have a big family gathering." With a laugh, she quipped, "So there's the whole schedule and you're all invited."

Magic in Sweden

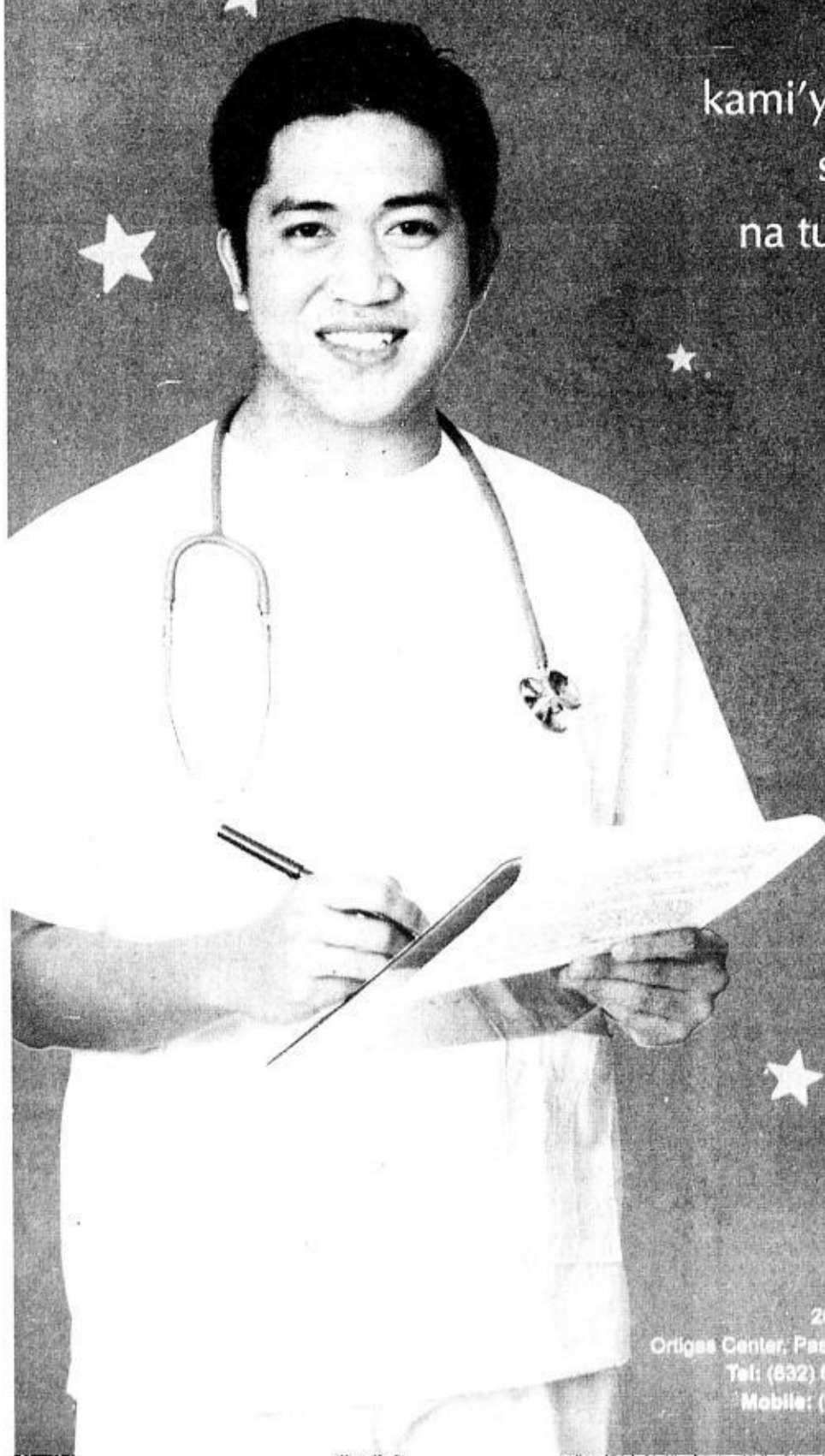
Eva Green, the Bond girl in Daniel Craig's first outing as Agent 007 in "Casino Royale" and a good witch in "The Golden Compass," remembered a "magical" Christmas in Sweden, the birthplace of her father.

"I was in Stockholm for the Bond movie promotion last year," she narrated. Eva, whose mother is French actress Marlene Jobert, explained, "I just loved it very much because we went to

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One surprise after another in 'Asian Idol' finals

WHEN WE FIRST HEARD that the "Asian Idol" regional singing tilt finals were instituting the "double country" voting scheme, we felt uneasy.

We knew that it was being imposed to prevent "country favoritism" (for example, Indonesians voting only for the Indonesian bet). But, we sensed that some voters could manipulate it by voting for their country's representative and the perceived weakest finalist—and that the scheme could blow up in their faces, if that weakest bet received an inordinately huge number of "throwaway" votes!

Was this what indeed transpired during the voting phase of the recent "Asian Idol" finals? Only the official tabulators could say for sure. But, many viewers were thrown for a loop when one of the "weaker" bets, Singapore's Hady Mirza, emerged as the first Asian Idol, beating the tilt's more "favored" finalists.

Singapore being only a "small" country, it was deemed unlikely that its bet could garner enough votes to emerge a serious contender—unless enough viewers appreciated his talent and charisma enough to forget "country loyalty" and vote for him.

Cool yet dynamic

That, too, was possible, since Hady surprised many viewers, including us, with his impressively cool and yet dynamic performance in the finals.

Whenever we're in Singapore, we make it a point to sample its local entertainment, both on TV and in clubs, and we've generally felt that Singaporean singers tend to sound a bit dated, both in singing style and repertoire.

But Hady was definitely notches above this desultory

VIEWFINDER

Nestor
U. Torre



The tilt was a success—it produced new regional stars for the int'l music scene

ry norm, and ended up as one of our own best bets. So, when he won, we weren't as stunned as some other viewers must have been.

We were also surprised by the stellar quality of the performances turned in by Malaysia's Jaclyn Victor and Vietnam's Phuong Vy. To our mind, Mirza, Victor and Vy were standout "Idol" material because they sounded and looked good.

With some exceptions, this is the stellar combination that "makes" outstanding singing idols. Even more positively, these three young bets could also do well internationally.

Indonesia's Mike Mohede and the Philippines' Mau Marcelo also impressed viewers with their exceptional voices, but their girth made them look sluggish and dowdy compared to the younger, trimmer bets.

India's Abhijeet Sawant was another voice-and-looks package, but his "balladeer" projection was less dynamic. Of course, with India's huge potential "voting" population, he could still have come out on top—but that didn't happen.

Despite the surprises and disappointments involved, the first "Asian Idol" regional tilt was a success, because it produced a number of relatively new singing stars who, like their US counterparts, could help energize the Asian and international music scene for many show biz seasons to come.



Nicole Kidman, o

From page 11

this old town. It was very magical. I expected creatures to come out any second. It was beautiful. They really know how to celebrate Christmas in Sweden—also in Germany. But in France, in my family, we don't really celebrate; we eat a lot of foie gras and truffles (laughter)."

Memorable holidays

Back in LA, Anthony Hopkins will have memorable holidays, for sure. The distinguished actor turns 70 on Dec. 31.

Anthony's wife, Stella Arroyave, is keeping her plan to celebrate his milestone a secret from him. But he said he didn't mind being with "all the people I haven't seen for 60 plus years (laughter)—all my little kids, the girlfriends I used to have (laughter). They will all be there. I actually have seen them. I was there in Wales last August. We had lunch in Cardiff. I invited all these people I haven't seen for years. They all turned up. It was wonderful to see them. It was great going home to Wales again but my wife won't tell me what's going on. She says she has some surprises for me."

Germany-born Diane Kruger, who stars with Nicolas Cage in "National Treasure: Book of Secrets," said, "I love Christmas. It's my favorite time of the year. I am going home this year to Germany and be with my mom."

She added: "We cook the

STRAIGHT from his
and all a merry Chris

Diane Krug
I'm going h
to be with r

goose together.
many—unlike i
ca—you put the
the 24th. You de
gether while it's
outside. When th
down, you light
really beautiful tr
Somewhere on t
a Christmas card

OPENS JANUARY 1

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Barney live at the Big Dome

KIDS HAVE UNTIL TONIGHT to catch Barney, the adorable dinosaur, at the Araneta Coliseum in "Let's Imagine Live! The Philippine Tour."

The show, which starts at 7 p.m., will see the purple dinosaur embarking on a wonderful magical journey with his Ideas Factory leading the way.

With their human friends Daniel Ethan, Madison and Taylor, Barney and prehistoric Baby Bop, BJ and Riff set off to test the limits of their imagination.

For inquiries, call 911-5555.

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BATANES 4:50 9:30 CATACOMB 2:30 7:10	ONE MORE CHANCE 12:45 3:40 6:35 9:30	THE KINGDOM 12:10 4:50 9:30	PASUKOB 3:00 7:20 BEOWULF 2:25 7:05	ENCHANTED 1:45 4:20 6:55 9:30

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GIFT-GIVING ON SHARON TONIGHT
Three of the busiest stars give away loads of gifts on "Sharon" tonight at around 9, on ABS-CBN. Judy Ann Santos travels to Bataan to offer presents to an Aeta community. Angel Locsin provides holiday cheer to children who experienced tragedy early in their lives. Meanwhile, Sharon Cuneta herself visits the Women's Correctional and surprises a female inmate as she is freed, to start a new life this Christmas.

Groban's 'Noel' tops pop charts

WITH HIS ALBUM "NOEL" NOW ON ITS fourth week at No. 1 on the Billboard 200, recent Manila visitor Josh Groban carves out for himself a piece of chart history.

This is the first Christmas set in the 51-year history of Billboard's weekly album chart to hold the top spot for four consecutive weeks, and only the second to chalk up that many chart-topping weeks. Elvis Presley's "Elvis' Christmas Album," which became the first seasonal title to reach No. 1 in 1957, was the only other one to lead the list for four weeks, but the fourth of those frames was not consecutive.

Last week, sales of "Noel" showed a 15 percent increase for a weekly sum of 669,000—the largest number for any Christmas album since Kenny G's "Miracles-The Holiday Album" sold 819,000 copies in the Christmas week of 1994.

More significantly, "Noel" has become



the best-selling album of the calendar year, overtaking "High School Musical

2" with sales of 2.8 million copies since its Oct. 2 release, while the Walt Disney soundtrack has sold 2.7 million since Aug. 14.

"Noel" also thus becomes the first album to lead the chart for four straight weeks since 1996.

Other stars reveal Christmas plans

Dewey Cox



COX CHRISTMAS!

Cox: country-rocker Dewey Cox wishes one Christmas!

er: 'It's my favorite time. Come this year to Germany my mom'

In Germany, America is on the list. It's from Dewey Cox, the country-rock superstar and it shows him holding a gift he has just unwrapped: a framed picture of someone vaguely familiar. Well, Dewey Cox is actually John C. Reilly in "Walk Hard: The



EVA GREEN, Bond girl and a good witch in "The Golden Compass," spent a magical Christmas in Sweden.

Dewey Cox Story," which spoofs all those music biopics, from "Walk the Line" to "Ray." Imagine Jack White in a cameo as Elvis, and John playing the fictitious Dewey Cox from 14 to 72.

And think of all the double entendres that co-writer and producer Judd Apatow ("The 40-Year-Old Virgin," "Knocked Up") mines just from the name, Dewey Cox, alone.

May your holidays be filled with laughter!

E-mail the columnist at rvnepales_5585@yahoo.com and read his blog, "The Nepales Report," on www.inquirerbloggers.net/nepalesreport.

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ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE PG13 1:00, 3:30, 6:00, 8:30	MARTIAN CHILD G 12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 7:50, 10:10	THE GOLDEN COMPASS PG13 12:10, 2:40, 5:10, 7:40, 10:10
THE KINGDOM R13 12:10, 2:40, 5:10, 7:40, 10:10	DEATH PROOF R13 1:30, 3:40, 5:50, 8:00	ELIZABETH THE GOLDEN AGE PG13 12:30, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:30

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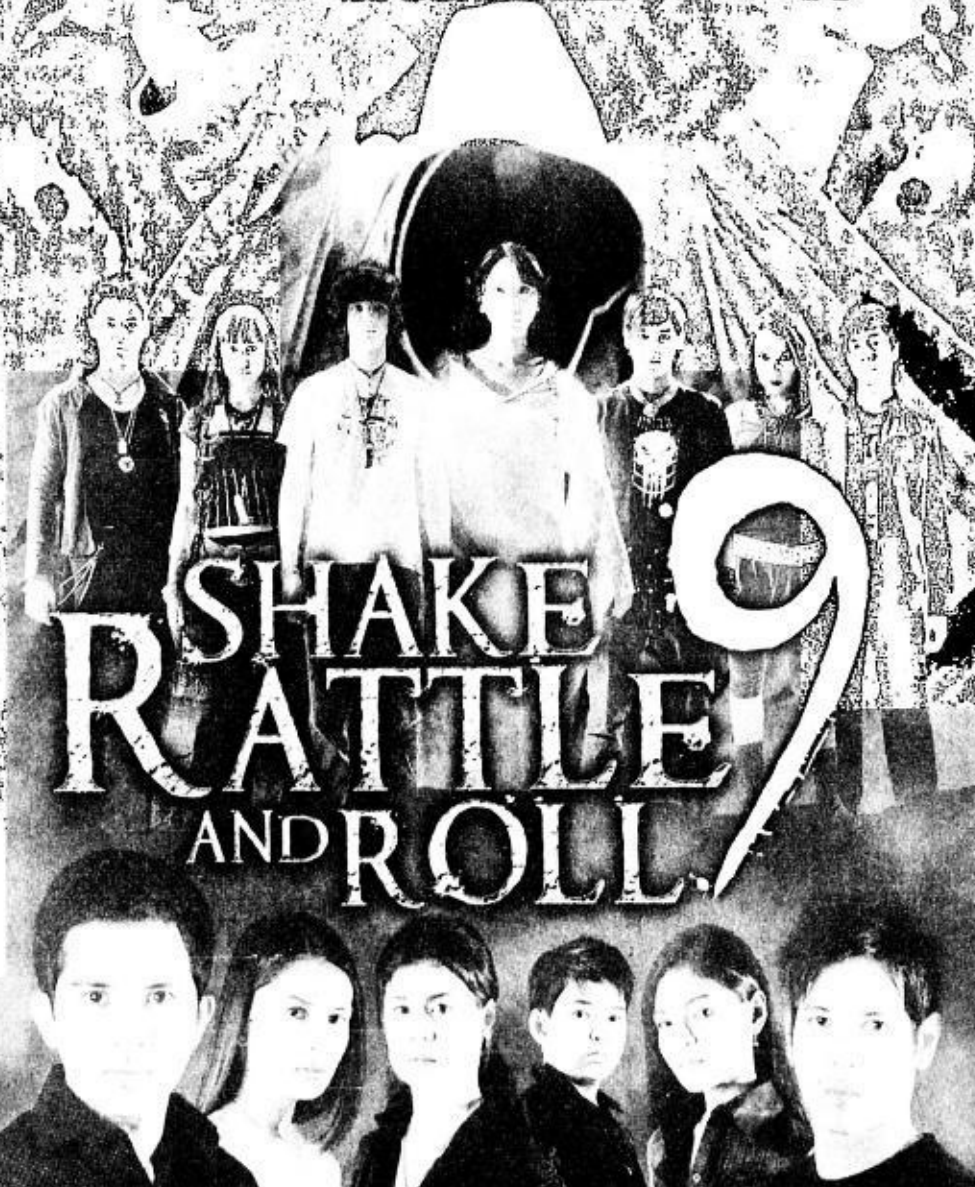
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AND DENNIS STRILLO



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Pictures of the Year 2007

More Pictures of the Year 2007—The Rock and hip hop stars, Hollywood A-listers and consistent critics' favorites—from the Reuters News Pictures Service. Next week, our own picks from the past 12 months, published exclusively here in the INQUIRER Entertainment pages.

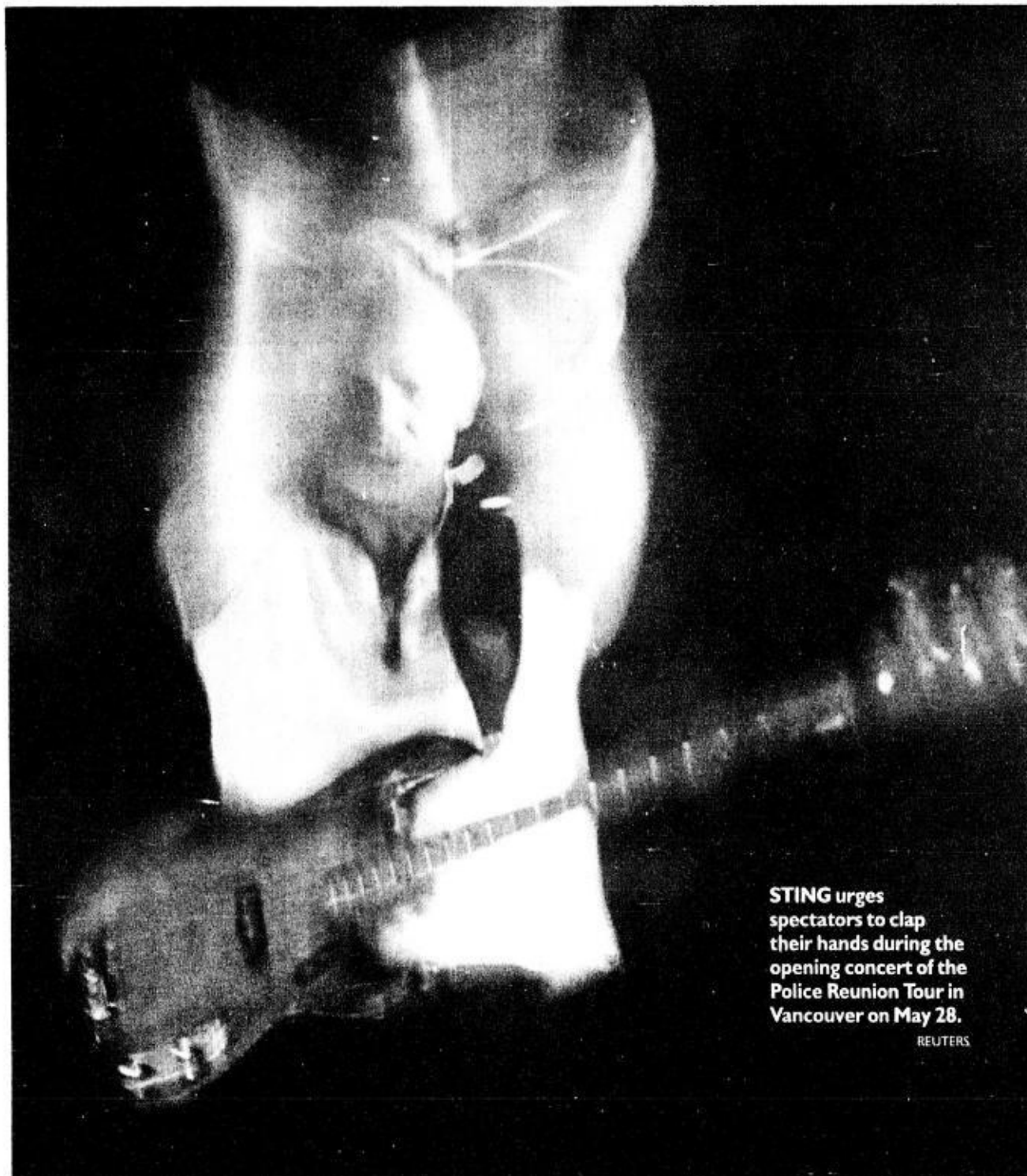


HELEN Mirren poses with her Best Actress award at the British Academy of Film and Television Arts awards at The Royal Opera House in London on Feb. 11.



ANNE Hathaway at the 79th Annual Academy Awards in Hollywood, on February 25.

RAP artist 50 Cent performs "Amusement Park" at the 2007 Black Entertainment Television Awards in Los Angeles, California June 26.



STING urges spectators to clap their hands during the opening concert of the Police Reunion Tour in Vancouver on May 28.

REUTERS



MARC Anthony, left, photographs the media as he and his wife Jennifer Lopez arrive at the 79th Annual Academy Awards in Hollywood, on Feb. 25.



FROM left: Abigail Breslin, Greg Kinnear and Alan Arkin share the stage at the 13th Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards in LA on Jan. 28.



WILL SMITH plays around with son Jaden as they arrive at the German premiere in Berlin of "Das Streben nach Glueck" ("The Pursuit of Happiness") by Italian director Gabriele Muccino, on Jan. 29.



JODIE Foster poses for a snapshot on the red carpet at the 79th Annual Academy Awards in Hollywood, on Feb. 25.



FORMER pro wrestler turned actor Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson walks on the red carpet, unimpaired of FMX rider Robby Maddison going airborne during a stunt at the 2007 Taurus World Stunt Awards at Paramount Studios in LA on May 20. The show honors the most outstanding stunt professionals from all over the world for their extraordinary performances.



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REUTERS

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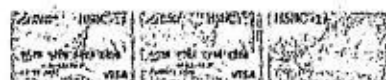
'Alay ni Da King' encore

CINEMA ONE ENCORES "ALAY NI DA KING: AN FPJ SPECIAL," 3:30 p.m. today. Hosted by Charo Santos-Concio and featuring a special sharing by Susan Roces, the special's many segments include "FPJ, The Artist," hosted by Vilma Santos; "FPJ, Ang Kaibigan," hosted by Christopher de Leon; and a music video put together by FPJ himself.

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METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2007



(INQUIRER Entertainment is running this MMFF guide to help moviegoers plan their holiday cinema tour. The festival runs from Dec. 25 to Jan. 7, 2008.)

"Shake, Rattle and Roll 9"

Regal Entertainment

Regal declares this year's "Shake" trilogy as the "scariest and most expensive" to date. Its producer claims it does not only have the biggest stars from giant networks ABS-CBN and GMA 7, it also has the "most impressive horror visuals and most difficult to mount scenes in cinema history."

"Christmas Tree"

Stars: Lovi Poe, John Prats, Gina Alajar, Nash Aguas, John Lopus, Sophia Baars, Boots Anson-Roa and Tonton Gutierrez

Directed by Paul Daza

In the story, Poe's father has passed away. She and the rest of her family visit relatives out of town, one of whom is Prats, whose home has a big, eerie-looking 8-ft. Christmas tree that, at night, turns into a giant monster with arms and legs.

"Bangungot"

Stars: Dennis Trillo, Roxanne Guinoo and Pauleen Luna

Directed by Mike Tuviera

In this episode, a red-cloaked figure is after Guinoo, who unwittingly cast a spell just so she could dream of the man she's in love with—Trillo. A flyover in Manila was closed to shoot a thrilling chase between the red-cloaked *Bangungot* and the protagonists.

"Engkanto"

Stars: Katrina Halili, Matt Evans, Melissa Ricks, Mart Escudero, Jewel Mische, Felix Roco and Sam Concepcion

Directed by Topel Lee

Halili, who plays the "Engkanto," is out to scare a band of musicians vacationing at a beach resort situated several miles away from Metro Manila. For this episode, countless talents were recruited, each was fitted with zombie costumes and made to wear prosthetics.

DID YOU KNOW...

DOY DEL MUNDO, SCREENWRITER OF such classics as "Maynila sa Kuko ng Liwanag," "Kisapmata" and "Batch 81," is raving about the new indie film, "Selda," Paolo Villaluna and Ellen Ramos' follow-up to their highly-acclaimed debut "Ilusyon."

Says Del Mundo: "There's a question in the last scene, 'Sino ang mananagot nito?' In the violent world of prisons, the mayor picks out one of the inmates to take the blame for a crime. Outside, there's no mayor to make the choice, only one's conscience. Sid Lucero's character

and the viewer are left with a moral quandary. But one thing is certain. I know who's answerable for this gem of daring work: Paolo and Ellen."

"Selda" will be screened today, 4 p.m. at Robinsons Indiesine Cinema 3.



Jury Award for 'Tirador'

By Marinel R. Cruz

"IT'S VERY ORIGINAL."

"It's powerful and energetic."

"It's different from the rest."

These were the comments of the Moroccan press and jury members at the 7th Marrakech International Film Festival in Morocco after watching Brillante Mendoza's "Tirador (Slingshot)," its director told INQUIRER Entertainment.

Co-awardee

"Tirador," the story of a group of petty thieves who operate in the busy streets of Quiapo to survive, features Coco Martin, Jiro Manio, Nathan Lopez, Kristoffer King, Nico Taverna, Harold Montano and Jaclyn Jose.

Too much tropical fruit in your fruit cocktail?

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11:00 PM

1 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
2 ENCHANTED
3 MARTIAN CHILD
4 BLOCKBUSTER FESTIVAL
5 KIDDIE FESTIVAL
6 DEATH PROOF/BATANES

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1 BEOWULF (DIGITAL 3D)
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 ENCHANTED
4 HOOD OF HORROR
5 BATANES
6 MARTIAN CHILD
7 GOLDEN COMPASS
8 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
9 BLOCKBUSTER FILMFEST
10 KIDDIE FESTIVAL
11 CARTOON NETWORK/HOOD OF HORROR
12 PASUKOB

METRO MANILA

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 GOLDEN COMPASS
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 HITMAN
4 BEOWULF
5 BATANES
6 MARTIAN CHILD
7 KIDDIE FESTIVAL
8 DEATH PROOF
9 PASUKOB
10 ENCHANTED
11 CARTOON NETWORK
12 BLOCKBUSTER FILMFEST

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 CATACOMBS
2 KIDDIE FESTIVAL
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 THE KINGDOM
5 GOLDEN COMPASS
6 ENCHANTED
7 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
8 BATANES
9 BEOWULF
10 DEATH PROOF
11 BLOCKBUSTER FILMFEST
12 CARTOON NETWORK

SM CITY DICUTAN 776-3055
1 CATACOMBS
2 GOLDEN COMPASS
3 HOOD OF HORROR
4 BATANES

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BLOCKBUSTER FILMFEST
3 DEATH PROOF
4 CARTOON NETWORK/ENCHANTED
5 KIDDIE FESTIVAL
6 BATANES/CATACOMBS

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 BATANES
2 HOOD OF HORROR
3 GOLDEN COMPASS
4 CATACOMBS

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 MARTIAN CHILD
3 KIDDIE FESTIVAL
4 BLOCKBUSTER FILMFEST
5 PASUKOB
6 ONE MORE CHANCE
7 BATANES
8 ELIZABETH
9 CATACOMBS/CARTOON NETWORK
SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BLOCKBUSTER FILMFEST
3 ELIZABETH
4 KIDDIE FESTIVAL
5 MARTIAN CHILD
6 ENCHANTED
7 ONE MORE CHANCE
8 CARTOON NETWORK/PASUKOB
9 DEATH PROOF
10 BATANES

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1 BATANES
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
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4 CATACOMBS

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1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 CATACOMBS
3 CARTOON NETWORK/DEATH PROOF
4 MARTIAN CHILD
5 KIDDIE FILMFEST
6 ELIZABETH
7 ONE MORE CHANCE
8 BLOCKBUSTER FESTIVAL
9 PASUKOB
10 BEOWULF
11 BATANES
12 ENCHANTED

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1 GOLDEN COMPASS
2 ENCHANTED
3 CATACOMBS
4 BATANES

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2 ENCHANTED
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 ONE MORE CHANCE
5 BATANES
6 PASUKOB
7 KIDDIE FESTIVAL
8 BLOCKBUSTER FILMFEST

SM CITY MARILAO (044) 9332013-17
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 PASUKOB
3 BATANES
4 ENCHANTED

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046) 474-3160
1 BATANES
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 PASUKOB
4 HOOD OF HORROR

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046) 432201-04
1 BATANES
2 THE GAME PLAN
3 PASUKOB
4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

SM CITY DAVAO (082) 2976998
1 LIONS FOR LAMBS
2 FRED CLAUDE/CARTOON NETWORK
3 THE GAMEPLAN
4 HITMAN
5 THE KINGDOM
6 GOLDEN COMPASS

SM CAGAYAN DE ORO (088) 859-2884
1 THE GAMEPLAN
2 FRED CLAUDE/ GOLDEN COMPASS
3 BATANES
4 THE KINGDOM

LUZON

SM CITY TAYTAY 286-2502 to 04
1 HITMAN
2 GOLDEN COMPASS
3 ELIZABETH

SM CITY LIPA (043) 784-0187
1 THE KINGDOM
2 BALLS OF FURY
3 FRED CLAUDE/ BATANES
4 HITMAN

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045) 0637891-85
1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 RENDITION
3 EL CANTANTE
4 THE KINGDOM/CARTOON NETWORK
5 BATANES
6 PASUKOB

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049) 8349811
1 PASUKOB
2 THE KINGDOM
3 HITMAN
4 GOLDEN COMPASS

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MINDANAO

SM CITY ILOILO (033) 3209422
1 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
2 RESERVED
3 HITMAN
4 GOLDEN COMPASS
5 RESERVED
6 EASTERN PROMISES
7 THE GAMEPLAN
8 ENCHANTED

SM CITY LUCENA (042) 7108977-80

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2 BATANES
3 FRED CLAUDE/
MR. MAGORUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM
4 BOOGEYMAN 2

SM CITY BAGUIO (074) 6197838-39
1 BATANES
2 HITMAN
3 THE GAMEPLAN
4 FRED CLAUDE

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2 THE KINGDOM
3 THE GAMEPLAN
4 EASTERN PROMISES
5 CARTOON NETWORK/EL CANTANTE
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3 GOLDEN COMPASS
4 BATANES

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7 CARTOON NETWORK/ UNREST
8 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

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FELLOWSHIP 10:00AM

2 MARTIAN CHILD

12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

7 ENCHANTED

12:50 3:00 5:10 7:20 9:30

3 indieSine: 3 DAYS OF DARKNESS

12:00 2:30 4:30 - Special Screening OF SELDA

8 ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE

12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

9 BATANES

1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

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2:40 4:30 6:20 8:10

7 GAME PLAN

1:00 3:10 5:20 7:30 9:40

3 BEOWULF 12:00 2:10 4:20

HITMAN 6:35 8:20 10:00

1 MARTIAN CHILD

12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

4 HOOD OF HORROR

1:00 3:10 5:20 7:30 9:40

2 ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE

12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

5 BATANES

12:40 2:55 5:10 7:25 9:40

3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

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11:05 1:35 4:05 6:35 9:05

5 BEOWULF

1:00 3:35 6:10 9:00

2 ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE

1:30 3:55 6:25 9:00

6 ENCHANTED

1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

3 GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF

12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

7 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

1:20 3:55 6:30 9:05

4 BATANES

1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

8 CATACOMBS

12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

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Jury Award . . . From page J1

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1	ENCHANTED 2:35, 5:15, 7:55, 10:35 G
2	THE GOLDEN COMPASS 2:40, 5:20, 8:00, 10:35 PG-13
3	ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE 2:40, 5:20, 8:00, 10:30 PG-13
4	THE KINGDOM 2:40, 5:20, 8:00, 10:30 R-13

The film shared the festival's Special Jury Award with Alexey Mizgirev's "Kremen (The Hard-hearted)," which tells the story of the struggles of Anton, a young man from the province who comes to Moscow

to see the girl he loves.

CenterStage Productions, the producer of "Tirador," has also sealed a video distribution deal with the French company Swift Distributions. The contract would

bring "Tirador" to France, Ireland and the United Kingdom, said Mendoza.

No less than jury head Milos Forman, two-time Oscar-winning director of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" and "Amadeus," presented the award to Mendoza.

Other jury members were director-
JURY/J4

SHANG CINEPLEX

1	ENCHANTED MTRCB GP 1:00, 3:30, 6:00, 8:30	3	KINGDOM MTRCB R-13 1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30
2	GOLDEN COMPASS MTRCB PG-13 1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30	4	FRED CLAUS MTRCB GP 1:00, 6:30 HAIRSPRAY MTRCB GP 3:30, 8:30

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M M T A MOVIE GUIDE

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// 6:15, 8:25, 10:35
R-13

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11:00, 1:20, 3:40
8:00, 8:20, 10:35
GP

4 ELIZABETH
11:15, 2:10, 5:00
7:50, 10:35
PG-13

5 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
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7:50, 10:35
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GREENBELT 1	1 MARTIAN CHILD	2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
GREENBELT 3	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE	3 MARTIAN CHILD	4 GONE BABY GONE
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	3 MARTIAN CHILD	4 GONE BABY GONE
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 THE GAME PLAN	3 FRED CLAUS	4 LUST CAUTION
MARKET! MARKET!	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 ENCHANTED	3 MARTIAN CHILD	4 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
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TriNoma - 901 3000

Ayala Malls

glorietta	Taylor Hicks Live! December 18; 7pm; Glorietta 4 Park
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ALABANG TOWN CENTER	Christian Bautista Live! December 22; 6pm; Town Plaza
AYALA CENTER CEBU	Christmas Chorale featuring Akafellas December 22; 7pm; Activity Center
MARKET! MARKET!	Japan Foundation Karate Demonstration December 18; 6pm; Activity Center
Onstage	Repertory Philippines presents TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE January 11 to 27, 2007 For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710 or visit www.repertory-philippines.com
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Celeb's dashing beau anything but meek

By the INQUIRER Entertainment Staff

You've heard of "The Wedding Crashers."

At a recent high-profile meeting, industry leaders were shocked to see a government factotum with loyal cohort in tow.

Their names were not on the guest list.

Split personality

A pretty young celeb-tante broke up with her dashing beau because, it turned out, he was a wolf in sheep's clothing. Personality differences led to a split-up.

Miss who?

Award-winning actress consulted a reporter: "Is it okay to put a Miss before my name in my new movie's posters?"

No need, Reporter replied. Mercifully, the girl listened. She's much too young to go the way of Ms Rita and Ms Celia.

New Darna?

Seems Marian Rivera jumped the gun with her insinuation that she's the next Darna? It's actually a three-cornered fight among Marian, Iza Calzado and Rhian Ramos.

The original rumor about Marian is that she'll play the title role in "Dyesebel." She reportedly got a stamp of approval from the heirs of Dyesebel creator Mars Ravelo, who also created Darna! Hmmm.

Joey's concern

Joey Reyes' two MMFF films—"Katas ng Saudi" and "Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo"—were graded 'A' by the Cinema Evalua-

tion Board.

But here's the running gag on the set of "Katas"...

Sen. Jinggoy was initially hesitant to ask Joey to direct him because "I knew he was in Edsa 2, leading the Erap re-

sign movement." Erap, of course, is Jinggoy's dad, former President Joseph Estrada.

Joey reportedly countered that he would retire from show biz if Jinggoy won Best Actor for "Katas."

Now, Direk is worried that he may have to do just that. But, he quips, "I could always imitate another senator and say, 'I lied!'"

Correctional concert

Location of tonight's "Sharon" talk show is the Women's Correctional in Mandaluyong. Sharon Cuneta hadn't intended to stay long, saying the place made her sad.

Guess what? A staffer recounts, "She asked for a sound system, sang three songs and chatted with the inmates for almost two hours."

Juday, nervous?

There are many adjectives we can use to describe Judy Ann Santos. "Nervous" is not one of them. But that she was, on the day of her launch as the face of Modess' latest campaign aimed at "encouraging Filipino women to strive for more."

"A force of nature," is how Juday was described as endorser. But she took the stage with shaky voice and hands, as did the emcee, Suzi Entrata Abrera, before her. They both said, at the start of their respective spiels, "I've never been this ner-

JUDY ANN Santos



vous."

Top of the tabloids

The top show biz stories in local tabloids this week. (And why we are moved, if we are moved.)

• Pia Guanio at Tintin Hermosa nag-iisnaban? (Those who care, show of hands, please.)

• Dingdong Dantesayaw makialam sa bangayang Katrina-Marian! (And why would he?)

• Marian at Katrina bati na! (Exactly our point.)

• Jake Cuenca, inilabas si Denise Laurel sa break-up nila ni Roxanne Guinoo!

• Roxanne Guinoo, sinibasib ng

halik si Dennis Trillo! (New word of the week alert!)

• Marian Rivera ibubuyangyang ang boobs! (Kakagulat naman ito.)

• Marco Alcaraz, naka-underwear lang nang akitin ni Bianca King! (Parang siya yata ang nang-akit.)

• Dingdong, ipinagtanggol ang GMA! (We can guess why.)

• I milyong ipinamudmod ni Dingdong, kinukuwestiyon!

• Dennis, Dingdong talbog kina Piolo at John Lloyd!

• Mga bading inis na inis kay Toni Gonzaga! (We're all ears.)

• Toni maldita, suplada? (We're all eyes, too)

• Toni extra lang sa "Maging Sino Ka Man"? (Just keeps getting better.)

• Alessandra de Rossi gustong maging "Dyesebel"! (Di puwede, kasi walang...)

• Yasmien Kurdi, JC de Vera nag-aaway dahil kay Michelle Madrigal? (Ha?)

• How true...May milagrong nagaganap kina Nadia Montenegro at Jimwell Stevens?! (Those who care,...)

• Angelica, Derek winawasaki! (Don't look at us.)

• Ayaw na raw ni Juday ng sangkatutak na anak: "Baka 'di kayanin ng matris ko!" (Ay, anu-vayan!)

• Jessica Rodriguez, David Bunevacz walang ginoyo! (But... but...)

• Dyowa ni Vicki Belo, 'di raw tunay na doktor? (Ay, afraid.)

• Beverly Vergel, dinamdang nang husto ang pagpanaw ni Ace! (Si Cristy Fermin din.)

(Sources: Bandera and Tumbok.)



MENDOZA, left, with Milos Forman

Jury award...

From page J3

screenwriter-producer Hamid Benani, actor John Hurt, actor-director Shekhar Kapur, director-screenwriter-producer Pavel Lounguine, actress Aissa Maiga, director-screenwriter Claude Miller, actress Parker Posey and actress Aitana Sanchez-Gijon.

The Moroccan festival, which ran from Dec. 7 to 15, featured 110 films from 23 countries.

Grand prize

Veiko Ounpuu's "Sugisball" ("Autumn Ball" from Estonia), the story of six people living in a huge metropolitan area during the Soviet era, bagged the festival's grand prize.

"Tirador" had three full-packed screenings to a "highly receptive crowd" during the week-long festival, Mendoza said.

"Kapur ('Elizabeth,' 1998) came up to me during the post-awards party," Mendoza said during his visit to the INQUIRER offices last week. "He asked how I managed to shoot the film in just 10 days. I told him this was a digital film. I guess the

projectors there were so state-of-the-art that people thought I used a 35 mm. Kapur also asked how I managed to motivate professional actors to act the way they did in the film. I told him about the cast members' immersion."

Competition

Tirador competed against Estonia's "Sugisball" ("Autumn Ball"), Algeria's "Wara El Mirat" ("The Other Side of the Mirror"), Japan's "Funukedomo, Kanashimino Al Wo Misero" ("Funuke Show Some Love, You Losers!"), Czech Republic's "Grandhotel," Morocco's "Samira Fi Dayaa" ("Samira's Garden"), Finland's "Miehen Tyo" ("Man's Job"), China's "Hong Se Kang Bai Yin" ("The Red Awn"), USA's "The Savages," Serbia's "Klopka" ("The Trap"), Mexico's "Partes Usadas" ("Used Parts"), South Korea's "Geomen Tangyi Sonyeo Oi" ("With a Girl of Black Soil") and The Netherlands' "Wolfsbergen."

More festivals

Mendoza's film, which had its world premiere at the Toronto IFF in September, will compete in Indianapolis, Singapore and Granada in Spain and will be featured in a forum in Berlin next year.

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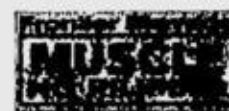
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24 months
0% interest
P3,511.25/mo
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DAV-DZ150

SONY BRAVIA KLV-46X300A



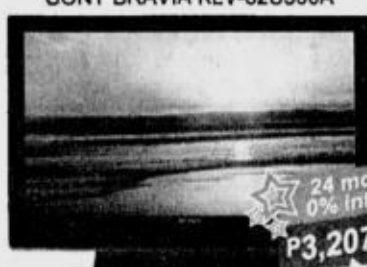
24 months
0% interest
P13,332.92/mo
FREE DAV-DZ150
& Spiderman Trilogy
Limited Edition DVD

SONY BRAVIA KS-60R200A



24 months
0% interest
P9,999.58/mo
FREE DAV-DZ150
& Spiderman Trilogy
Limited Edition DVD

SONY BRAVIA KLV-32U300A



24 months
0% interest
P3,207.92/mo
FREE
DAV-DZ150

SONY DSC-T2
(available in black, white, blue, green and pink)



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FREE
Mini Tripod



SONY MHC-GN1100D

P2,790.83/mo
FREE KIKS Package

SONY DSC-W80



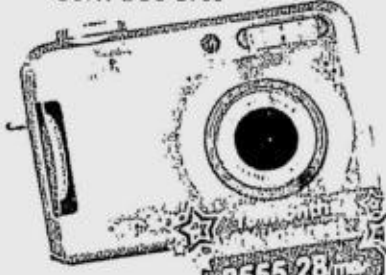
P1,221.94/mo
FREE
Cleaning Kit

SONY DSC-W200



P1,833.28/mo
FREE
Cleaning Kit

SONY DSC-S700



P555.28/mo
FREE
Carrying Bag

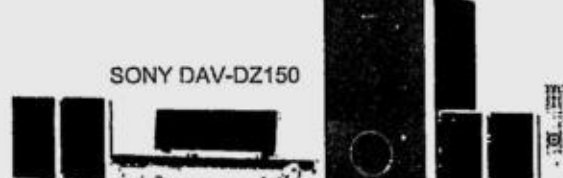
SONY FREE ITEMS.....



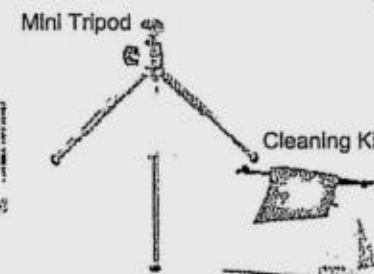
Spiderman Trilogy Limited Edition DVD



KIKS Package



SONY DAV-DZ150



Mini Tripod

Cleaning Kit



Carrying Case

SAMSUNG



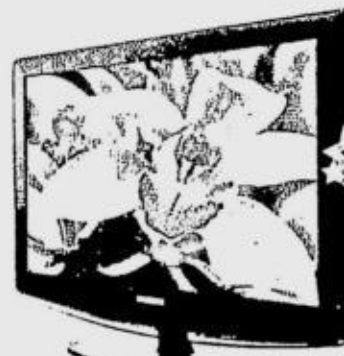
SAMSUNG LCD LA52M81B

18 months
0% interest
P18,327.78/mo
FREE
LA-19R71 LCD TV
OR LESS P25,000
FOR CASH PURCHASE



SAMSUNG LCD LA46S81B

18 months
0% interest
P7,216.67/mo
FREE
LA-19R71 LCD TV
OR LESS P15,000
FOR CASH PURCHASE



SAMSUNG LCD LA40R81B

18 months
0% interest
P6,105.56/mo
FREE
LA-19R71 LCD TV
OR LESS P15,000
FOR CASH PURCHASE

SAMSUNG
FREE ITEM:



SAMSUNG
LA-19R71 LCD TV

AQUOS



CATEGORY	MODEL	SAVINGS ON CASH PURCHASE	CREDIT CARD 12 MOS. DISCOUNT	MONTHLY PAYMENT ON 12 MOS. TERMS	MONTHLY PAYMENT ON 18 MOS. TERMS
LCD	LA-52M81B	SAVE P25,000.00	SAVE P15,000.00	P26,241.67	
LCD	LA-46M81B	SAVE P15,000.00	SAVE P5,000.00	P13,741.67	
LCD	LA-46S81B	SAVE P15,000.00	SAVE P5,000.00	P10,408.33	
LCD	LA-40R81B	SAVE P15,000.00	SAVE P5,000.00	P8,741.67	
LCD	LA-40S81B	SAVE P15,000.00	SAVE P5,000.00	P7,908.33	
LCD	LA-37R81B	SAVE P5,000.00	NO DISCOUNT	P6,241.67	
LCD	LA-32R81B	SAVE P5,000.00	NO DISCOUNT	P4,575.00	
LCD	LA-32S81B	SAVE P5,000.00	NO DISCOUNT	P3,991.67	
LCD	LA-26R71B	SAVE P5,000.00	NO DISCOUNT	P3,325.00	

MODEL	SRP	DISC
LC-55G90T	P998,000.00	P25,000.00
LC-52A83M	P446,995.00	
LC-52G7M	P346,995.00	
LC-48A83M	P299,995.00	
LC-48A63M	P279,995.00	
LC-48P7M	P239,995.00	
LC-48PX5M	P167,995.00	
LC-42A83M	P244,995.00	
LC-42A63M	P192,995.00	
LC-42A53M	P188,995.00	
LC-42PX5M	P139,995.00	
LC-37A53M	P122,995.00	
LC-37PX5M	P94,995.00	
LC-37B5M	P94,995.00	
LC-32A53M	P84,995.00	
LC-32PX5M	P59,995.00	
LC-32B5M	P57,995.00	
LC-26PX5M	P52,995.00	
LC-20B10H	P39,995.00	
LC-19A33M	P37,995.00	
LC-52P7M	P356,995.00	With cash

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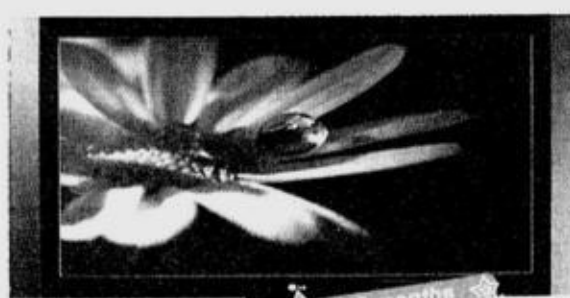
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January 31, 2008



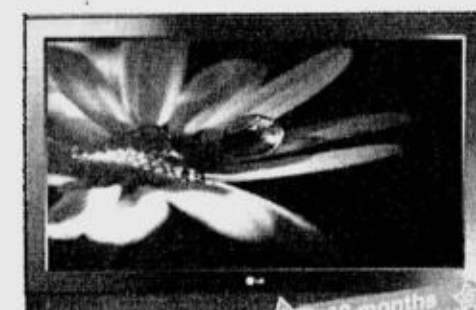
LG LCD TV 42LC2RR

12 months
0% Interest
P14,166.25/mo.



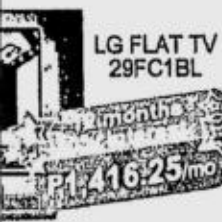
LG LCD TV 42LC3R

12 months
0% Interest
P9,999.58/mo.



LG LCD TV 42LC4R

12 months
0% Interest
P9,166.25/mo.



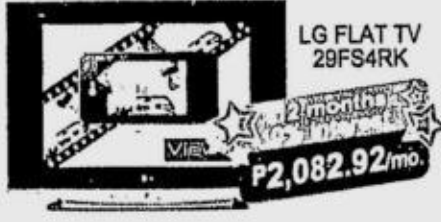
LG FLAT TV 29FC1BL

12 months
0% Interest
P1,416.25/mo.



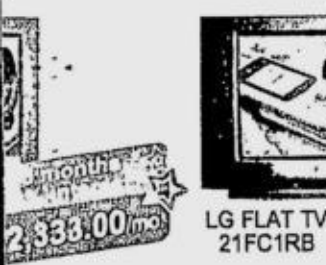
LG FLAT TV 29FX4BL

12 months
0% Interest
P1,666.25/mo.



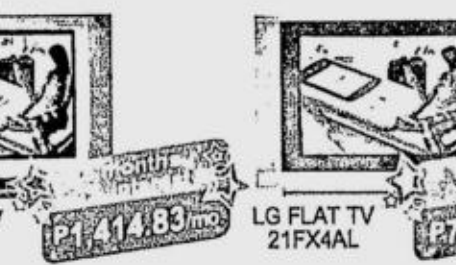
LG FLAT TV 29FS4RK

12 months
0% Interest
P2,082.92/mo.



LG FLAT TV 21FC1RB

12 months
0% Interest
P2,333.00/mo.



LG FLAT TV 21FX4AL

12 months
0% Interest
P1,414.83/mo.



LG FLAT TV 21FS4RK

12 months
0% Interest
P916.58/mo.

CATEGORY	MODEL	SRP	OFFER	FREE ITEM
FLAT	21FB3RB	P6,999.00	3 months	TV RACK
FLAT	21FC1RB	P8,495.00	6 months	TV RACK
FLAT	21FX4AL	P9,495.00	12 months	TV RACK
FLAT	21FS4RK	P10,999.00	12 months	TV RACK
FLAT	29FC1BL	P16,995.00	12 months	TV RACK
FLAT	29FX4BL	P19,995.00	12 months	TV RACK
FLAT	29FS4RK	P24,995.00	12 months	TV RACK
LCD	32LC4R	P59,995.00	12 months	HT-202SF
LCD	32LC3R	P69,995.00	12 months	HT-202SF
LCD	37LC3R	P89,995.00	12 months	HT-352SD
LCD	42LC4R	P109,995.00	12 months	HT-352SD
LCD	42LC3R	P119,995.00	12 months	HT-352SD
LCD	42LC2RR	P169,995.00	12 months	HT-352SD



JVC LCD LT-32EX17

JVC
The Perfect Experience

JVC LCD LT-32FX77



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SAVE P50,000

JVC FLAT TV AV-21QT17 + DVD XV-N352S



12 months
0% Interest
P1,081.58/mo.
SAVE P3,000

JVC FLAT TV AV-21BA17 + DVD XV-N352S



12 months
0% Interest
P998.25/mo.
SAVE P3,000

JVC FLAT TV AV-21ST27 + DVD XV-N352S



12 months
0% Interest
P1,248.25/mo.
SAVE P3,000

JVC FLAT TV AV-29RT28 + DVD XV-N352S



12 months
0% Interest
P1,831.58/mo.
SAVE P4,000

	SRP	CASH	12 MOS.	18 TO 24 MOS.	SKU	MODEL	SRP	CASH	12 MOS.	18 TO 24 MOS.
K17	P69,990.00	P10,000 CASH	LESS P5,000	TH-L1	10111905	LT-Z46ZF7	P199,990.00	P25,000 CASH DISCOUNT	LESS P5,000	TH-L1
K77	P79,990.00	DISCOUNT + TH-L1 + XV-N650	+ TH-L1	OR				+ TH-L1 + XV-N650	OR	OR
K17	P89,990.00	OR	LESS P25,000	LESS P20,000				OR	LESS P25,000	LESS P20,000
K77	P99,990.00	LESS P30,000						LESS P30,000		
KX7	P99,990.00									
KX7	P99,990.00									
K17	P129,990.00	P25,000 CASH DISCOUNT	LESS P5,000	TH-L1	10108528	HD-Z56RF7	P249,990.00	P80,000 CASH DISCOUNT	LESS P5,000	TH-L1
K77	P139,990.00	+ TH-L1 + XV-N650	+ TH-L1	OR	10108530	HD-Z61RF7	P269,990.00	+ TH-L1 + XV-N650	+ TH-L1	OR
		OR	LESS P25,000	LESS P20,000	10108532	HD-Z70RF7	P299,990.00	OR	OR	OR
		LESS P30,000						P100,000 CASH DISCOUNT	P70,000 CASH DISCOUNT	P50,000 CASH DISCOUNT



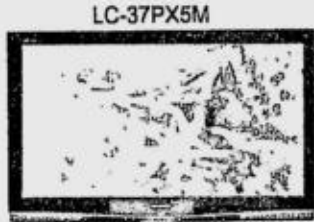
LC-52A83M



LC-26PX5M

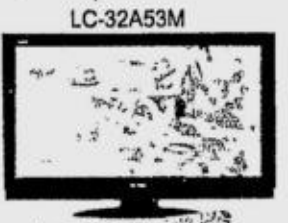
12 months
0% Interest
P2,944.17/mo.
FREE HOME THEATER SYSTEM

SHARP



LC-37PX5M

12 months
0% Interest
P5,277.50/mo.
PLUS P5,000 FREE HOME THEATER SYSTEM



LC-32A53M

12 months
0% Interest
P5,277.50/mo.
PLUS P5,000 FREE HOME THEATER SYSTEM



29V-FX300S

12 months
0% Interest
P1,999.83/mo.
PLUS P999 FREE DVD PLAYER



29V-FX500S

12 months
0% Interest
P2,024.83/mo.
PLUS P999 FREE DVD PLAYER



21V-FR70M (BK)

12 months
0% Interest
P724.83/mo.
PLUS P999 FREE DVD PLAYER



21V-FR310S (BK)

12 months
0% Interest
P833.17/mo.
PLUS P999 FREE DVD PLAYER



29V-FT450S

12 months
0% Interest
P1,832.50/mo.
PLUS P999 FREE DVD PLAYER

	18 Mos.	12 Mos.	0% Interest
NO DISCOUNT	NO DISCOUNT	NO DISCOUNT	NO DISCOUNT
ADD P5000 HOME THEATER SYSTEM	ADD P5000 HOME THEATER SYSTEM	ADD P5000 HOME THEATER SYSTEM	ADD P5000 HOME THEATER SYSTEM
FREE INSTALLATION FOR WALLMOUNT BRACKET	FREE INSTALLATION FOR WALLMOUNT BRACKET	FREE INSTALLATION FOR WALLMOUNT BRACKET	FREE INSTALLATION FOR WALLMOUNT BRACKET
FREE bracket with installation	FREE bracket with installation	FREE bracket with installation	FREE bracket with installation
AV-1000 for 52 inch	AV-1000 for 52 inch	AV-1000 for 52 inch	AV-1000 for 52 inch
AV-1000 for 48 inch	AV-1000 for 48 inch	AV-1000 for 48 inch	AV-1000 for 48 inch
LG-1000 for 52 inch	LG-1000 for 52 inch	LG-1000 for 52 inch	LG-1000 for 52 inch
LG-1000 for 48 inch	LG-1000 for 48 inch	LG-1000 for 48 inch	LG-1000 for 48 inch
FREE bracket LG-1000	FREE bracket LG-1000	FREE bracket LG-1000	FREE bracket LG-1000

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 SHARP DVD
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MOVIE BUFF BUNDLE
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VIZON		LESS P20,000 on CASH or straight credit NOW P86,995	LESS P8,000 on 12months at 0% interest P1,903.75 per week (52 wks)	24 months at 0% interest P1,028.80 per week (104 wks)	
	LCD-42CA8Z • 42" WXGA resolution • 16.7 million colors, HDMI, PIP • HD Ready (720p/1080i/1080p) • Surround Sound / Bass Expander SRP: P106,995	FREE SANYO Wireless Headset	FREE SANYO Wireless Headset	FREE SANYO Wireless Headset	HOME UPGRADES! A ADD P5,000 and get a SANYO 21" FLAT TV (ST-21VF1) B ADD P6,000 and get a SANYO personal refrigerator (SR-8K) C ADD P6,500 and get a SANYO 0.5HP Air Conditioner (SA-56P) <small>* Also includes FREE VPC-S700 SANYO Digital Camera</small>
	LCD-37CA8Z • 37" WXGA resolution • 16.7 million colors, HDMI, PIP • HD Ready (720p/1080i/1080p) • Surround Sound / Bass Expander SRP: P86,995	FREE SANYO Wireless Headset	LESS P6,000 on 12months at 0% interest P1,557.60 per week (52 wks)	24 months at 0% interest P836.49 per week (104 wks)	
	LCD-32CA8Z • 32" WXGA resolution • 16.7 million colors, HDMI, PIP • HD Ready (720p/1080i/1080p) • Surround Sound / Bass Expander SRP: P52,995	FREE SANYO Wireless Headset	LESS P4,000 on 12months at 0% interest P942.21 per week (52 wks)	24 months at 0% interest P509.56 per week (104 wks)	

SANYO SLIM TV		SANYO CRT TV		SANYO CRT TV		SANYO CRT TV	
	ST-29YS2 • Flat Screen CRT TV • DVD Component Input • Full AV Stereo • Bass Expander / Surround Sound FREE SANYO wireless headphones & TV Rack P19,995 12mos. 0% interest		ST-21FS2 • Flat Screen CRT TV • DVD Component Input • Full AV Stereo • Bass Expander / Surround Sound FREE SANYO wireless headphones & TV Rack P9,995 12mos. 0% interest		ST-21YS2 • Flat Screen CRT TV • DVD Component Input • Full AV Stereo • Bass Expander / Surround Sound FREE SANYO wireless headphones & TV Rack P9,495 12mos. 0% interest		ST-21XS2 • Flat Screen CRT TV • DVD Component Input • Full AV Stereo • Bass Expander / Surround Sound • Super Widescreen Output FREE SANYO wireless headphones & TV Rack P10,995 12mos. 0% interest
	ST-21SE1V • ECO Mode for Saving Energy • DVD Component Input • Full AV Stereo • Bass Expander / Surround Sound • Elegant Double Ender Design P6,495 3mos. 0% interest		ST-21CE1V • ECO Mode for Saving Energy • AV Multi-system / Monitor • Full AV Stereo • Bass Expander / Surround Sound • Elegant Double Ender Design P5,995 3mos. 0% interest		ST-14SE1V • ECO Mode for Saving Energy • AV Multi-system / Monitor • Full AV Stereo • Bass Expander / Surround Sound • Elegant Double Ender Design P4,495 3mos. 0% interest		ST-14CE1V • ECO Mode for Saving Energy • AV Multi-system / Monitor • Full AV Stereo • Bass Expander / Surround Sound • Elegant Double Ender Design P4,295 3mos. 0% interest
						ST-21VF1 FLAT TV • ECO Mode for Saving Energy • DVD Component Input • Bass Expander / Surround Sound • Full AV Stereo • Bass Expander / Surround Sound • Elegant Double Ender Design FREE SANYO wireless headphones & TV Rack P7,495 6mos. 0% interest	

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- Willing to do field work
- Must be result-oriented

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- Above average in oral and written communication
- Know how in recruitment & training
- Willing to do field work
- Must be result-oriented
- Willing to accept provincial assignments

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- Candidate must possess at least a Bachelor's Degree in Marketing, Communication Arts or equivalent
- Above average in oral and written communication
- Experience is an advantage but not a requirement
- Computer literate
- Willing to do field work

PROGRAMMER

- Candidate must possess at least Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science/ Information Technology or equivalent
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 - Excel Macro and/or Excel Pivot Reporting
 - Visual Basic 6.0, V.B.Net
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- With at least 1 year experience in programming

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- Provincial applicants are very much welcome

BRANCH MANAGERS

- College graduate
- At least 1 year experience in Sales & Marketing
- Above average in oral and written communication
- Know how in hiring/staffing
- With good interpersonal skills
- Customer-service oriented
- Provincial applicants are very much welcome

ASSISTANT CHAPEL MANAGERS

- College graduate
- With at least 2 years experience in Memorial Service Industry
- Above average in oral and written communication
- With good interpersonal skills
- Customer-service oriented
- Willing to work on shifting schedules
- Provincial applicants are very much welcome

FAMILY CARE REPRESENTATIVES

- College graduate
- With pleasing personality, hardworking and energetic
- Can work with minimum supervision
- Willing to work on shifting schedule
- Above average in oral and written communication
- Customer-service oriented

CREMATORY OPERATOR

- College level preferably college graduate
- With at least 2 years experience in operating or assisting Cremation equipment
- Willing to be trained in the latest Cremation Technology
- Know-how in all the Cremation processes
- Customer-service oriented

ACCOUNTING & AUDIT STAFF

- Candidate must possess at least a Bachelor's degree in Accountancy or Business Administration
- CPA is an advantage
- Proficient in MS Office Application
- Above average in oral and written communication
- Can work with minimum supervision
- Willing to travel and accept provincial assignments
- Provincial applicants are very much welcome

OFFICE STAFF

- College graduate
- Computer literate
- Above average in oral and written communication
- Can work with minimum supervision
- New graduates are very much welcome

Interested candidates, please send your updated resumé to:

E-mail: cecilpb@stpeter.com.ph

Or may personally apply at:

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INQUIRER is looking for dynamic Sales individuals for the following areas:

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- Excellent customer relations skills
- Passionate about selling
- Has a working knowledge of word processing tools such as Word, Excel and Powerpoint
- Must be a resident of Metro Manila

SALES CONSULTANTS (Campaluzon, North Luzon, South Luzon and Davao)

- Must be a resident of Central Luzon (Pampanga or Tarlac), North Luzon (Dagupan or Baguio), South Luzon (Laguna or Batangas) and Davao City.
- Familiar with and has a good network of contacts in the local government units and private businesses in the region
- 1-2 years experience in Sales
- Keen interest in selling newspaper advertising ads and supplements
- Likes to think out-of-the-box solutions and new ideas
- Excellent customer relations skills
- Passionate about selling

Send your application (with photo) NOW to:

The Human Resources (c/o IPI)

PDI Building Pasong Tamo corner Yague and Mascardo Sts. Makati City 1200

or email to: jreyes@inquirerpublications.ph; spanlillo@inquirer.com.ph; tramirez@inquirerpublications.ph

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC



MARIA CORAZON SAPUNGAN-BRITANICO



AINA ALDEA CASTILLA LLANERA



FE JABADAN LORILLA

MARIA CORAZON SAPUNGAN-BRITANICO, AINA ALDEA CASTILLA LLANERA and FE JABADAN LORILLA whose pictures appear above, has an outstanding warrant of arrest duly issued by the Regional Trial Court Branch 67, Pasig City for Criminal Case Nos. 130056, 130054, and 130057 respectively, indicated for Estafa committed against Virginia Food, Inc.

Any information leading to their immediate arrest will be rewarded. Please contact Tel. No.: (032) 344-8676 or 09209069631.

MANAGEMENT VIRGINIA FOOD, INC.

(PDI - December 23, 2007)



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Finance
INSURANCE COMMISSION
1071 United Nations Avenue
Manila

Head Office
P.O. Box 3589 Manila
FAX No. 522-14-34
Tel. Nos. 523-84-61 to 70
E-mail: ok@monila.com.ph

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Notice is hereby given that the following companies previously placed under conservatorship and/or receivership for cause by the Insurance Commission, are now due for liquidation, namely:

Insurance Company	Name & Address of Liquidator
1. Rico General Insurance Corporation	Ms. Teresita P. Gutierrez 408 A. Evekal Building 855 A. Arnaiz Avenue Makati City
2. Development Insurance & Surety Co.	Atty. John A. Apatan c/o Insurance Commission 1071 United Nations Avenue Ermita, Manila

Parties having claims against these companies are hereby notified to file their claims under oath not later than six (6) months from the date of the last publication of this notice on December 23, 2007, or until June 23, 2008, together with all supporting documents and/or relevant proofs detailing the character, basis and amount of each and every claim, directly with the appointed Liquidator either personally or by mail, for consideration in their eventual liquidation, pursuant to pertinent provisions of the Insurance Code, as amended. CLAIMS FILED AFTER JUNE 23, 2008 SHALL ONLY BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE REMAINING ASSETS, IF ANY, AFTER SETTLEMENT OF ALL CLAIMS SUBMITTED WITHIN THE SAID DEADLINE.

EDUARDO T. MALINIS
Insurance Commissioner

(PDI-Dec. 2, 9, 16 & 23, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH - EASTERN VISAYAS
Government Center, Candahug, Palo, Leyte

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Government of the Philippines (GOP) has received loan proceeds from Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) for the implementation of the Schistosomiasis Control component of the Help for Catubig Agricultural Advancement Project (HCAAP) in the municipalities of Catubig and Las Navas, Northern Samar.

The DOH-Eastern Visayas, through the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential bidders to apply for eligibility and shortlisting for consulting services for the implementation of the project, to wit:

1. Project Implementer for Soil Survey (project duration - 4 months)
2. Project Implementer for Prevalence Survey and Treatment (project duration - 4 months)
3. Project Implementer for Health Promotion and Advocacy (project duration - 2 months)

Interested consultants must submit their LOIs and accomplished Eligibility Documents on or before December 28, 2007 at DOH-Eastern Visayas, Government Center, Candahug, Palo, Leyte and secure the Eligibility Documents therefrom. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. Only those that are short-listed will be entitled to submit bids.

The BAC shall draw up the short list of consultants from those who have submitted Letters of Intent and have been determined as eligible both in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act 9184 (RA 9184) and its implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A). The short list of prospective bidders shall consist of five (5) consultants. The criteria and rating system for shortlisting are:

- 30% Applicable experience of the consultant and its partner(s) in case of joint ventures (JV), considering both the overall experiences of the firm and the individual experiences of the principal and key staff including the times when employed by other firms;
- 40% Qualification of personnel who may be assigned to the job vis-a-vis extent and complexity of the undertaking; and
- 30% Current workload relative to capacity;

Letter of intent and accomplished Eligibility Documents must be delivered by hand, through mail, or facsimile to the address below on or before December 28, 2007.

A pre-bid conference will be conducted on January 18, 2008. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the IRR-A of RA 9184 on February 5, 2008. In accordance with IRR-A of RA 9184, only bids from short listed consultants will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in the Eligibility Documents. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184 the contract will only be awarded to the Highest Rated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during the post-qualification.

The PROCURING ENTITY shall evaluate bids using the Quality Based Evaluation procedure. The criteria and rating system for the evaluation of bids shall be provided in the Instructions to Bidders.

The contract shall be completed as specified per project duration.

Eligibility Documents shall be available at DOH-Eastern Visayas BAC Secretariat, upon submission of a Letter of Intent and upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P200.00 to the DOH-Eastern Visayas Cashier. Bid Documents will be available to shortlisted bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P200.00.

Interested consultants may obtain further information from DOH-Eastern Visayas, Government Center, Candahug, Palo, Leyte from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

The DOH-Eastern Visayas reserves the right to reject any and all bids, annul the bidding process, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

DOH-EASTERN VISAYAS
DR. MINERVA P. MOLON
Bids and Awards Committee Chair
Government Center, Candahug, Palo, Leyte
Tel. Nos. (053) 323-4999 & (053) 323-5025
Fax No. (053) 323-6517
E-mail address: chd_ev@yahoo.com
Website address: www.chd8.gov.ph

(Sgd.) MINERVA P. MOLON, MD, MPH, FPPA
BAC Chairperson

Noted:
(Sgd.) TEOGENES F. BALUMA, MD, MHA, MDM, FPCHA
Head of the Procuring Entity
(PDI-Dec. 23 & 26, 2007)



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Social Welfare and Development
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The KALAHI-CIDSS Project of DSWD has received a technical assistance grant from the Japan Policy and Human Resources Development (PHRD) Facility. The approved grant aims to develop a systematic approach to learning and knowledge sharing, through the establishment of municipal learning networks and popularization of the Project's CCD (community-driven development) approaches, best practices and lessons learned.

Towards the above, the Project is inviting NGOs (non-government organizations) to submit expressions of interest to be engaged as MUNICIPAL NETWORK NGO LEARNING FACILITATOR covering three (3) KALAHI-CIDSS-assisted municipalities per region, located in Bicol (covering the municipalities of Minabac and Garchitorena in Camarines Sur, and Sta. Elena in Camarines Norte, in Region 5), Visayas (covering the municipalities of Leyte, Tabango, and La Paz in Leyte, Region 8) and Mindanao (covering the municipalities of Midsalip, San Pablo and Alicia in Region 9). NGOs may express interest in one or more Regions.

Interested NGOs must be able to perform the following tasks of a Municipal Network NGO Learning Facilitator:

- Prepare one-year learning activities implementation plan per municipal network
- Conduct field work, data gathering, interviews and observations; design, facilitate and document focused group discussions and participatory reflection sessions among communities; and develop the lessons drawn from the reflection sessions into brief narratives and stories of community experiences and lessons learned through the KALAHI-CIDSS project
- Based on lessons drawn from the community reflection sessions, design and produce at least 2 popularized IEC materials (e.g. calendar, community komiks, newsletter), communicating experiential lessons in community empowerment and good governance shared by the communities
- Using leads from lessons drawn in the community reflection sessions, build up mini-case studies and write case study reports, highlighting empowerment and good governance-enhancing strategies and practices of KALAHI-CIDSS-assisted communities
- Train community volunteers in joint learning and lessons drawing
- Conduct selected inter-municipal network lessons sharing activities
- Link up the municipal network with external network/s of the NGO
- Perform other related tasks needed

The assignment will take one year starting February 2008. Copy of a detailed TOR for the assignment may be obtained from the DSWD office at the address below or the KALAHI-CIDSS website www.kalahi-cidss.gov.ph.

NGO selection process. DSWD will prequalify NGOs from those who have submitted their expressions of interest. NGOs that pass the prequalification will be requested to submit a Technical and Financial Proposal, based upon which DSWD will draw up a short-list of NGO applicants. DSWD aims to select one NGO per one or more region.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

1. Application letter of not more than 2 pages stating the qualifications of the NGO to perform the tasks required
2. Copy of NGO's organizational profile, official registration, management and staffing, and latest financial statement
3. Complete information regarding any previous NGO assignment related to designing and conducting community learning activities, specifically in the context of community-based or community-driven development
4. Name/s of contact persons with complete contact details

Interested NGOs must submit all of the above to Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat, 2nd floor, DSWD Central Office, Batasan Pambansa Complex, Constitution Hills, Quezon City, with telephone number 931-8101 loc 217 / 951-7116 (fax) or by email to bacsec@dswd.gov.ph; dswdbacsec@yahoo.com on or before 10 January 2008.

(Sgd.) DIRECTOR ARNEL B. GARCIA
Vice-Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - December 23, 2007)

CLASSIFIEDS ADVISORY

To accept all ads, Classifieds Megamall Sales Office will be open on Monday, Dec. 24 and Monday, Dec. 31, 2007

from 10:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. or call at 635-0219. Please place your ads before Dec. 25, 2007 and Jan. 1, 2008 as we are closed on said dates.

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late CATALINA C. VILLARBA who died on May 14, 2007 was extrajudicially settled among her heirs as per Doc. No. 73, Page 15 Book No. VII, Series of 2007 under Notary Public Atty. Hipolito Sañez of Pasig City. (PDI-Dec.16, 23 & 30, 2007)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late SANTOS F. VERGA was extrajudicially settled among their heirs as per Doc# III Page# 24 Book# I Series of 2007 by Notary Public Atty. Robert M. Panganiban of Pasig City. (PDI - Dec. 16, 23 & 30, 2007)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of EMILIANA E. TIAM-ZON a parcel of land Lot 10 Bldg 100-A-3-3 CERO REC No. 76727 TCT No. 112908 containing an area of 154sqm situated at Sto Nino Marikina City has been extrajudicially settled distributed among her children as per Doc No. 385 Page No. 79 Book No. 332 Series of 2007 before Notary Public Atty Ramon H. Clemente of Quezon City PTR No. 0064930 1-2-07 (PDI - December 23, 30, 2007 and January 6, 2008)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late PURITA ZAFRA-BASETA was extrajudicially settled by the heirs as per Doc No. 90 Page No. 19 Book No. XXV Series of 2007 By Notary Public Atty.Eleanor T. Hernandez of Muntinlupa City M.M.(PDI-Dec.9,16, & 23,07)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late REMEDIOS C. BANOT was extrajudicially settled by the heirs as per Doc. No. 75; Page No. 14 Book No. 10; Series of 2007 By Notary Public Atty. Arturo A. Cabides of City of Manila (PDI-Dec. 9,16,23,2007)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that A. Soriano Corp. Stock Cert. Nos. A00040192 A00040775 A00078780 A00097655 A00116037 with 8,887 total shares registered to Imelda Agri Farms Co. Inc. was lost. If no contest received new certificate will be issued. PDI-Dec. 9, 16 & 23, 2007

Notice is hereby given of the loss of Enrique T. Yuchengco, Inc. Stock Certificates No. 637 for 591 shares, No. 1019 for 2,294 shares, No. 1038 for 87 shares, No. 1057 for 3,127 shares and No. 1078 for 88,475 shares, issued on January 8, 1985, April 4, 1995, April 25, 1995, February 26, 1997, and January 17, 2000, respectively, all in the name of Rosita Yu. New stock certificates will be issued to replace said lost stock certificates if no contest received by Enrique T. Yuchengco, Inc. within the reglamentary period. (Dec. 23,30, 2007 & Jan. 6, 2008)

Notice is hereby given to that PHILEX MINING CORPORATION, Stock Certificates No. 0110865,0117353 0122015,0123405 0140055,0170228 0184940,0217321,A0012436 A0051152,A0083932 A0175883,A0241333 Reported lost if no contest is received New certificates will be issued (PDI-Dec.16,23&30/07)

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Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
PHIL. BEST LIFE 4U CORPORATION Blk. 19 Lot 4 Aguirre Ave., BF Homes Parañaque City	Heejung Chung (w/o Kim) Korean	Assistant Manager
PHIL. BEST LIFE 4U CORPORATION Blk. 19 Lot 4 Aguirre Ave., BF Homes Parañaque City	Changho Kim Korean	General Manager
TELUS INTERNATIONAL PHILIPPINES, INC. 31/F Discovery Center, 25 ADB Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Neeraj Kumar Thakran Indian	Director of Operations
GAMINGWEB, INC. 17/F, Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Ngoc Man Huynh Vietnamese	Sports-book Operations Officer
SUN LIFE OF CANADA (PHILIPPINES) INC. 16/F, Tower 2, The Enterprise Center, 6766 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Neera Aggarwal Canadian	GM, Ingenium Shared Services at Role Framework Band 4
SCANILO TRADING CORP. Rm. 309 Kim Sui Ching Bldg., 473 Sto. Cristo St., Binondo, Manila	Zejun Hou Chinese	Asst. Technical Supervisor
SCANILO TRADING CORP. Rm. 309 Kim Sui Ching Bldg., 473 Sto. Cristo St., Binondo, Manila	Yanxin Zheng Chinese	Office Manager
SCANILO TRADING CORP. Rm. 309 Kim Sui Ching Bldg., 473 Sto. Cristo St., Binondo, Manila	Yazhi Wang Chinese	Supervisor
SCANILO TRADING CORP. Rm. 309 Kim Sui Ching Bldg., 473 Sto. Cristo St., Binondo, Manila	Biaoya Zheng Chinese	Supervisor
SCANILO TRADING CORP. Rm. 309 Kim Sui Ching Bldg., 473 Sto. Cristo St., Binondo, Manila	Yonglin Zeng Chinese	Consultant
UNITED OVERSEAS BANK PHILIPPINE 17/F Pacific Star Bldg., Makati Ave. cor. Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Chai Eng Goh Singaporean	Head of Operations Group
WITHPHIL SECURITY AGENCY CORPORATION G-0170 Quirino Ave., Tambo, Parañaque City	Young Yun Korean	Manager
AUSENCO ASIA PTY LTD 3/F Rufino Bldg., 6784 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Michael Gerard Foster Australian	Project Manager
AUSENCO ASIA PTY LTD 3/F Rufino Bldg., 6784 Ayala Ave., Makati City	David John Brown Australian	Project Procurement Manager
AUSENCO ASIA PTY LTD 3/F Rufino Bldg., 6784 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Brian Denis Handy Australian	Project Controls Manager
JDB INTL CONSULTANCY AND MANAGEMENT HOUSE 6/F Rm. 107, T & D House, 356 Magallanes St., Intramuros, Manila	Myung Kug Kim Korean	Consultant
S.J. LAND INC. 15/F Insular Life Corp. Center, Insular Drive, FCC, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Joong Geun Kang Korean	Assistant Manager
YUAN HAI TRADING CO. LTD. 473 Sto. Cristo St., Binondo, Manila	Shaole Shi Chinese	Supervisor
KPI ELEVATORS INC. King's Court Bldg. I, Pasong Tamo St. cor. dela Rosa St., Makati City	Hannu Kalevi Myrberg Finnish	Country Manager
TOP AMUSEMENT TECHNOLOGY INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION 22/F Burgundy Corporate Tower, No. 252 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Ling-Kuei Wu Taiwanese	Auditor (Mandarin Speaking)
TOP AMUSEMENT TECHNOLOGY INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION 22/F Burgundy Corporate Tower, No. 252 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Xiangying Wu Chinese	Information Management Personnel (Mandarin Speaking)
1001 TRADING INTL CORP. Unit 901 Medical Plaza Bldg., 25 San Miguel Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Slyeol Lim Korean	Manager
JOHNSON & JOHNSON (PHILIPPINES), INC. Edison Road, Bo. Ibayo, Parañaque City	Ila Eka Suwayna Karo Karo Indonesian	Sr. Brand Manager
BHULLER & FRIENDS TRADING COMPANY 87 J. Basa St., Pedro Cruz, San Juan City	Sandeep Singh Deol Indian	Loan Officer
MANJIKI LENDING & TRADING CO. 6 Mapayapa Village Cond., Pulang Lupa, Las Piñas City	Ravinder Singh Bhatti Indian	Loan Officer
EROOM PHILIPPINES INC. Unit E, G/F Highway 54 Plaza, 986 Standford St. cor. EDSA, Mandaluyong City	Wonsoo Do Korean	President
LEY GOOD MIX CONCRETE CORP. 1688 Elisco Road, Ibayo, Tipas, Taguig City	Wan-Chun Chang Liao Chinese	General Manager

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s
please communicate with the Regional Director.

RAYMUNDO G. AGRAVANTE
OIC, Regional Director

(PDI-December 23, 2007)



National Transmission Corporation

December 11, 2007

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Republic of the Philippines
Repair of 300 MVA Power Transformer (T2) of Dolores Substation
[RIZ-07-29492]

The scope of work shall include Supply of Labor, Tools, Materials and Equipment for the Repair, Testing, Installing and Commissioning of 300 MVA Power Transformer (T2) of Dolores Substation including Supply and Retrofitting of Electronic Winding and Oil Temperature Monitoring Device.

1. The National Transmission Corporation (TransCo) through the Annual Corporate Budget of 2007 Intends to apply the sum of PHILIPPINE PESOS FORTY MILLION FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS (PHP 40,500,000.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payment under the contract for the Repair of 300 MVA Power Transformer (T2) of Dolores Substation. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected.

2. TransCo now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the Repair of 300 MVA Power Transformer (T2) of Dolores Substation. The duration of the contract is Seven (7) Months. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last fifteen (15) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding, and have key personnel and equipment (owned, leased or under purchase) available for the prosecution of the project. The list of minimum equipment requirement is indicated in the Eligibility Documents.

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietors, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from TransCo and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., during working days starting December 17, 2007.

5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of PHP 5,000.00. The method of payment will be on cash basis only. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

6. TransCo will hold a Pre-Bid Conference to all Interested parties on January 8, 2008 at 1:30 p.m. at the Training Center Building, National Transmission Corporation, Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner Agham Road, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines.

7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before the date and time specified in item 8 below. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form and in the amount specified in Clause 22, Section III, Bid Data Sheet of the Bidding documents or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

8. Bid opening shall be on January 23, 2008 at 1:30 p.m. at the Training Center Building, National Transmission Corporation, Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner Agham Road, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines.

9. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the said address.

10. The bidding is also open to foreign bidders with eligibility requirements described in Clause 3 above and in the Bidding Documents.

11. TransCo reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Mr. R. D. NABONG
Manager, Bids & Contracts Management Department
Ground Floor, Power Center
National Transmission Corporation
Quezon Avenue Corner B.I.R. Road
1104 Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines
Tel. No. (632) 981-2212; 981-2213; 921-23-08
Fax No. (632) 921-23-08
Website: <http://www.transco.ph>

(Sgd.) Atty. NOEL Z. DE LEON
Chairman, Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI- Dec 15 & 23, 2007)



PHILIPPINE OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT ADMINISTRATION
(POEA)

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The PHILIPPINE OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT ADMINISTRATION (POEA), through its Bids and Award Committee (BAC), invites qualified agencies, businesses and suppliers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following services and items below for the calendar year 2008.

Qualified bidders for the security services, janitorial services and administrative personnel, must be at least five (5) years in the business of providing such service.

ITEM/DESCRIPTION	Approved Budget Ceiling for the contract	Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline of Submission and Opening of Bid Docs	Price of Bid Documents (Non-Refundable)
Drinking Water with H&C Dispenser (ITB 006-07)	P142,032.00	Dec. 28, 2007 10am - 11am	Jan. 11, 2008 10am - 11am	P150.00
Administrative Personnel (ITB 007-07)	P511,347.84	Dec. 28, 2007 11am - 12am	Jan. 11, 2008 11am - 12am	P500.00
Janitorial Services (ITB 008-07)	P3,845,905.90	Dec. 28, 2007 2pm - 3pm	Jan. 11, 2008 2pm - 3pm	P3,500.00
Security Services (ITB 009-07)	P7,128,000.00	Dec. 28, 2007 3pm - 4pm	Jan. 11, 2008 3pm - 4pm	P8,000.00

The Eligibility and Bid Documents shall be available at the BAC Secretariat, 3rd Floor Blas F. Ople Bldg., Ortigas corner EDSA, Mandaluyong City, T:(02)7219481; F:(02)7243724; after payment for the Eligibility and Bid Documents. Only bidders who have purchased the Eligibility and Bid Documents shall be eligible to attend in the Pre-Bid Conference and participate in the bidding process.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation-A (IRR-A) as amended.

The schedule of BAC activities are as follows:

For Drinking Water with H&C Dispenser:

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility and to Bid	December 17, 2007
2. Issuance of Eligibility and Bid Documents	December 17, 2007
3. Pre-bid Conference	December 28, 2007, 10am
4. Receipt and Opening of Eligibility and Bid Documents	January 11, 2008, 10am

For Administrative Personnel:

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility and to Bid	December 17, 2007
2. Issuance of Eligibility and Bid Documents	December 17, 2007
3. Pre-bid Conference	December 28, 2007, 11am
4. Receipt and Opening of Eligibility and Bid Documents	January 11, 2008, 11am

For Janitorial Services:

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility and to Bid	December 17, 2007
2. Issuance of Eligibility and Bid Documents	December 17, 2007
3. Pre-bid Conference	December 28, 2007, 2pm
4. Receipt and Opening of Eligibility and Bid Documents	January 11, 2008, 2pm

For Security Services:

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility and to Bid	December 17, 2007
2. Issuance of Eligibility and Bid Documents	December 17, 2007
3. Pre-bid Conference	December 28, 2007, 3pm
4. Receipt and Opening of Eligibility and Bid Documents	January 11, 2008, 3pm

The POEA assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) ATTY. HANS LEO J. CACDAC
BAC Chairperson

(PDI-December 16 & 23, 2007)



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education (DepEd)
**SECONDARY EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT
AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (SEDP)**
National Project Management Office (NPMP)
5th Floor, Bonifacio Building, DepEd Complex, Meralco Ave., Pasig City
Telephone No. 635-98-22; 631-0673; Telefax No. 635-9826

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Date : December 6, 2007
Loan No. : PH-P200

1. The Republic of the Philippines through the Department of Education (DepEd) has received a loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), in Japanese Yen towards financing the cost of Secondary Education Development and Improvement Project (SEDP). It is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contracts for the supply and delivery of Furniture to selected Secondary Schools in the Philippines.

2. The DepEd Division Offices, through their respective Bids and Awards Committee (DBAC) invite sealed bids from eligible bidders for the supply and delivery of school furniture for classrooms, science laboratories, home economics, industrial arts, libraries, guidance and faculty rooms of the different secondary schools in the Division Offices of Leyte, Guimaras, Benguet and Surigao del Sur, following the schedules below:

Division Office	Issuance of Bid Documents	Pre-Bid Conference	Bid Opening	Venue	Telephone Number
Leyte				Division Office of Leyte, Palto, Leyte	(053)323-8882
Guimaras				Division Office of Guimaras, Jordan, Guimaras	(033)237-1032
Benguet	Dec 19-28, 2007	Jan. 4 2007, 10:00 am	Jan. 16, 2008, 10:00 am	Division Office of Benguet, La Trinidad, Benguet	(074)309-3209
Surigao del Sur				Division Office of Surigao del Sur, Tandag, Surigao del Sur	(086)211-2335

3. Bidders are required to submit bids for the complete quantities of all the furniture items intended for the selected schools in the Divisions of Leyte, Guimaras, Benguet and Surigao del Sur, per schedule of requirements of the Bidding Documents.

4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain complete information about the proposed projects upon submission of a Letter of Intent and acquire the bidding documents from the Division's Bids and Awards Committee (DBAC) Offices. Further inquiries may be directed at the telephone numbers listed in paragraph 2.

5. Bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders starting on the date stated in paragraph 2 upon payment to the Division Cashier of a non-refundable fee of One Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (P1,500.00) only.

6. Sealed bids, together with the required bid security of equivalent percentage to the total bid amount as specified in ITB-7 page 5 of the instructions to Bidders must be delivered to the Division Office at the time, date and place as indicated in paragraph 2. Said bids will be opened immediately for reading in public in the presence of bidders or their authorized representatives.

7. The Division BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality therein and award the furniture packages to one or more bidders.

(Sgd.) Sarah T. Apurillo
DBAC Chairperson
Leyte

(Sgd.) Mauria F. Palit
DBAC Chairperson
Guimaras

(Sgd.) Carmelito R. Felix
DBAC Co-Chairperson
Surigao del Sur

(Sgd.) Glenn N. Duguls
DBAC Chairperson
Benguet

(PDI- Dec. 16 & 23, 2007)

ERRATUM

In the ad of DOLE-NCR published on December 18, 2007, the names of the following foreign nationals

BHULLER & FRIENDS TRADING COMPANY 87 J. Basa St., Pedro Cruz, San Juan City	Sandeep Singh Deol Indian	Loan Officer
MANJIKI LENDING & TRADING CO. 6 Mapayapa Village Cond., Pulang Lupa, Las Piñas City	Ravinder Singh Bhatti Indian	Loan Officer
EROOM PHILIPPINES INC. Unit E, G/F Highway 54 Plaza, 986 Standford St. cor. EDSA, Mandaluyong City	Wonsoo Do Korean	President
LEY GOOD MIX CONCRETE CORP. 1688 Elisco Road, Ibayo, Tipas, Taguig City	Wan-Chun Chang Liao Chinese	General Manager

were inadvertently omitted. Said names are inserted in today's advertisement.

(PDI-December 23, 2007)

Our apologies.

Matuyatuya National HS Batch '82 Grand Reunion

MATUYATUYA NATIONAL High School Batch '82 of Matuyatuya, Marinduque will hold its grand reunion with a theme "25 years Na Po Kami" on Friday, Dec. 28 at Matuyatuya National High School.

Please join and participate in this blissful and meaningful occasion, and reminisce the good old days with its former classmates. For more info, call the following: Joey Valenzuela at 0919-5241406 and Leo Fidelino at 0909-3586560.

SJA's Baliktanaw Reunion

AFTER 21 YEARS, don't you want to reminisce all the fun and nerve-wrecking memories?

Come and see your batchmates once again! St. James Academy, Malabon Batch '86 is inviting all Alumni for the "Balik Tanaw Reunion" on Dec. 29, 5 p.m. at Oa-

sis, 3rd Floor Gallery, Aurora Blvd., Quezon City (near Broadway Centrum).

An enjoyable night of 80's music, gift giving, exciting games, and major raffle and surprises await you! For confirmation, call Arnold at 447-2525 or mobile (0918-9379587).

PCCHS Batch '63 45th Reunion

THE PHILIPPINE College of Commerce High School Batch '63 announces its forthcoming 45th Anniversary Reunion to be held from Jan. 25 to 27, 2008 at the Grand Villa Resort and Butterfly Center, in Bay, La-

guna. For inquiries and reservation, please call Vilma Contreras at cell phone 09163477805, Deanna Harry-Bajar, 09178915116, or Belma Orca, 09179815848.



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"Where, o death, is your victory?
Where, o death, is your sting?
But thanks be to God! He gives us the
victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

CLEMENCIO Q. PEÑA

"Dad"

(April 16, 1930 -- December 21, 2007)

His loving wife Angela "Bing", children Abby, Butch & Frances, Mike & Marlene, Eric & Rio, Rona & Manny, Jay & Elen, grandchildren Kelsey, Matthew, Paul, Isiah, brothers Teddy & Angelo, in-laws, cousins, other relatives and friends, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

Dad's remains will temporarily lie in state on December 22-24 at the Christ the King Chapel B. Greenmeadows Subd., Q.C. and will be transferred to Puerto Princesa City at the later date.

Interment in Palawan to be announced later.

In Loving Memory of DR. MANUEL G. ALCARAZ

Peacefully joined his Creator
on December 20, 2007 at the age of 79.

His loving wife, children, grandchildren, other relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Christ the King Chapels in Greenmeadows, Quezon City.

Cremation will be today, December 23, 2007, 9:00 a.m., at Loyola Memorial Park Crematorium, Marikina City.

Message of Appreciation

We, sisters Nancy A. Perez, Mary A. Garcia, Charito A. Corpus, nephews and nieces of the late

Wivina "Web" O. Armeña

who joined her Creator on December 2, 2007, wish to express our heartfelt gratitude to all those who offered masses, prayed, kept vigil and who in countless other ways consoled with us in our days of bereavement.

ATTY. ALIPIO "ALY" B. MORABE

Joined his Creator on December 21, 2007
at the age of 72.

His bereaved wife CONNIE, children AL, LEE (†), PIO, JEAN and JOY, sons-in-law, brother LOY and wife MEDING, grandchildren MARVYN, TONETTE, JOEY and JENNY, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel 3A of Nacional Memorial Homes, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be announced later.

MATILDE G. FRANCO

Peacefully joined our Lord on December 7, 2007
at the age of 98, at the Washington Hospital
in Fremont, CA.

She is survived by her loving husband Jose. C. Franco of their 68 years of marriage and children Remy Gordon (husband Glen) and Bobby Franco (wife Gloria); 5 grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren.

Please pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

"Even when I walk through a dark valley, I feel no harm. For you are at my side, your rod and staff give me courage..." Psalm 23:4

In Loving Memory

Tomorrow, December 24, is the 1st death anniversary of
BELOVED SON, BROTHER, Grandson, Nephew, Cousin, FRIEND

SIDNEY ISHMAEL HERMOSISIMA SANTOS

Sid's Friends and Loved Ones are INVITED to a 10 a.m. Special Mass, tomorrow, Dec. 24th at Forbes Crypt Bldg. #3 where SIDNEY is interred.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered for SIDNEY tomorrow, December 24, 2007:

Sanctuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati	5:40 am
Makati Medical Center Chapel, Makati City	10:00 pm
Greenbelt Chapel, Greenbelt Park, Legazpi Village, Makati	8:00 pm
Sto. Niño Church, Cebu City	8:00 am
Sacred Heart Church, Cebu City	6:00 pm
St. Jerome & Sta. Susana Parish, Ayala Alabang	7:00 pm
St. James the Great Parish, Ayala Alabang	8:30 pm
Parish of the Resurrection, Ph1, BF Homes, Parañaque	6:45 am
Presentation of the Child Jesus, Ph3, BF Homes, Parañaque	6:45 am
Mary Mother of the Church, BF Resort, Las Piñas City	9:00 pm
Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Philam Vill., Las Piñas City	6:45 am
Mary Immaculate Parish, Moonwalk, Las Piñas City	9:00 pm
Queen of Peace Church, Bacolod City	

THANK YOU for your prayers for the eternal repose of our Darling SIDNEY's soul.

CLASSIFIEDS

Nacional Memorial Homes celebrates first year with The Heritage Park

NACIONAL MEMORIAL HOMES RECENTLY celebrated its 1st year anniversary under The Heritage Park and Rosehills Memorial Management (Phils.) Inc (RMMI) in simple ceremonies held at its office and chapels located on G. Araneta Ave. in Quezon City. During the event was Nacional Memorial Homes general manager Tony Quiogue and his staff who welcomed guests and friends from the local memorial and pre-ned industries to the evening's festivities.

A veritable industry mainstay founded at the turn of the last century, Nacional as it is popularly called, has had the honor of serving no less than 8 Philippine Presidents and generations of the nation's most prominent families.

The acquisition by The Heritage Park Mortu-

ary and Crematory in 2006 ushered in an entirely new beginning for Nacional Memorial Homes. With more than a hundred years of experience and tradition behind it, and now fused with the symbol of 21st century modernity which is The Heritage Park, the past year has been a turning point in Nacional's long and distinguished history. Wide and far reaching changes have since taken place. From various infrastructure renovations to improvements in its customer service handling, Nacional is meeting the challenges posed by a dynamic and ever-changing memorial service industry.

And as the second year dawns on this new beginning, expect Nacional to be once again at the forefront just like The Heritage Park, blazing a trail for others to follow.

Be part of the High-Performance Team

JOIN THE EPERFORMAX XTREME CAREER Expo. As part of the company's efforts to strengthen its employee referral program and to provide exceptional careers, Eperformax, one of the country's most stable call center companies based in Buendia, Makati City, is holding a post-Christmas job fair dubbed as "Xtreme Career Expo". The job fair will be on Dec. 27-28, from 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. at the Trade Hall (near the food court area) of StarMall Edsa in Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City.

The said event aims to recruit call center agents for the different Eperformax clients and

have them start training on Jan. 2, 2008. In addition to extending the holiday cheer by employing more people, Eperformax will also give a post-Christmas bonus to all applicants who will be hired during the 2-day job fair.

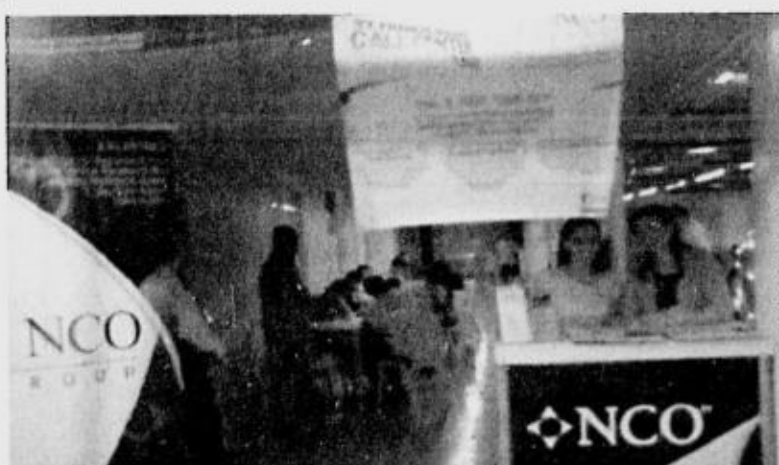
ePerformax Contact Centers is a privately held corporation established through a partnership formed between Performance Consulting Group of the U.S. and Transnational Diversified Group (TDG) of the Philippines.

For more information, contact 490-2088 loc. 6823/09178546149. Or email: xteam@eperformax.com.

NCO group call center career fair 2007

NCO GROUP, AN industry leader in Business Process Outsourcing will be holding another 1-day exclusive Job Fair on Friday, Dec. 28 at the 3rd Floor Activity Area of St. Francis Square, Doña Julia Vargas Avenue corner Bank Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. Positions being offered to jobseekers are Customer Service Representatives, Directory Assistance Agents, Collections Agents and Sales Agents.

NCO Group offers above industry compensation of up to P18,000 basic salary, 20% night differential, meal benefit, paid training, recreational facilities, regularization and



NCO JOBFAIR.

The NCO group recently conducted a successful exclusive jobfair at St. Francis where more than a hundred jobseekers attended.

performance-based incentives, loyalty program, referral bonus, medical and life insurance packages to its employees. Signing bonus will also be given to successful applicants. Visit the NCO Group Call Center Career Fair 2007 @ St. Francis Square.

For more information, please call 981.7586 and look for Sarah Zabala. Bring your resumé and be assessed right away!

For more information, please call 981.7586 and look for Sarah Zabala. Bring your resumé and be assessed right away!

People, Events & Products

Isuzu makes Christmas merry with 2008 Alterra

ISUZU PHILIPPINES CORP PLAYS good ol' Santa this Yuletide season as the diesel authority unwraps the best gift you can possibly give your family: the 2008 Alterra sport-utility vehicle. As cliché as it may sound, the best just got even better as Isuzu upgrades the tried-and-tested Alterra by equipping it with additional new features that you'd love to see sitting under your Christmas tree.

Chief of these new features is a much-improved in-car entertainment system that incorporates a reverse-assist camera so that backing up in tight parking slots will now be a breeze. The 2008 Alterra now has the new JVC AVX33 DVD player that boasts a 3.5-inch monitor, Dolby digital decoder, iPod connectivity, and 5.1-channel digital surround speaker system. The new entertainment system is also now dual-zone ready, wherein the driver can listen to his favorite music channel even if the rear passengers are watching DVDs.

The images captured by the rear spoiler-installed camera are fed into the audiovisual system and displayed on the head unit's high-resolution monitor. The audio system is wonderfully complemented by a slim and fashionably designed 180-watt subwoofer at the back. Best of all, the new JVC system includes a Bluetooth function that allows you to take mobile-phone calls hands-free. This means more safety for those corporate executives who need to stay connected with their associates even on the road.

Outside, the side mirrors have been

given a classier look with a European-themed design. More significantly, these mirrors are now power-folding for added convenience when navigating narrow spaces. The driver's side view is also equipped with a wide-angle mirror for better visibility.

Getting inside, meanwhile, has been made more luxurious and more expedient as the 2008 Alterra now comes with a transmitter-integrated key that allows for keyless entry—a feature normally found on high-end luxury vehicles. And once inside, you will notice that the new Alterra now has chromed



door handles, further accentuating the upscale look and feel of the vehicle.

The 2008 Isuzu Alterra continues to be powered by the groundbreaking 3.0-liter 4JJ1-TC iTEQ common-rail direct-injection turbodiesel that effortlessly dispenses 144 hp and 294 Newton-meters of torque. This iTEQ diesel powerplant-like other Isuzu diesel engines before it—is renowned for its power, fuel-efficiency and environment-friendliness. Both four-speed automatic and five-speed manual transmissions are available.

"We wish to reward all those who have been good this year with an excellent SUV that will make every day feel like Christmas," said IPC president Keiji Takeda. "Even those who have been a little naughty are free to test-drive the 2008 Alterra at their nearest Isuzu dealership."

The available colors for the 4x2 are alpine white, sterling silver, dune gray, pearl silver and starry black. The colors for the 4x4 are starry black, sterling silver and pearl silver.

The 4x2 manual sells for P1,490,000 (monotone/two-tone) and P1,500,000 (pearl color). The 4x2 automatic goes for P1,545,000 (monotone/two-tone) and P1,555,000 (pearl color). Finally, the 4x4 automatic can be driven home for P1,673,000 (monotone/two-tone) and P1,683,000 (pearl color).

Visit your nearest Isuzu dealership now as December buyers of the 2008 Alterra will get a free Infrared Dual-Zone Headphone Set as well as a Die-Cast Miniature Alterra.

In Metro Manila, Isuzu dealerships can be found in Edsa Balintawak, Quezon Avenue, Commonwealth, Pasig, Manila, Makati and Alabang. In the provinces, Isuzu dealerships are located in Isabela, Pangasinan, Cabanatuan, Pampanga, Bulacan, Cavite, Batangas, San Pablo, Bacolod, Iloilo, Mandaua, Cagayan de Oro and Davao. Check also www.isuzuphil.com for other Isuzu updates.

Have yourself a merry little Christmas: Drive away in the 2008 Isuzu Alterra and get yourself the swankiest sleigh in town.



Up With People holds shows in Meralco

UP WITH PEOPLE, A NON-PROFIT WORLDWIDE youth organization, in collaboration with Zest-O and RC Cola, held their two main shows at the Meralco Theatre Dec 1 and 2. The concert began with a few words from representatives of Zest-O Corp, Christian Lim, marketing manager and Joseph Consul, senior brand manager.

The performance began with a native song from Africa and an introduction of the different cultures that the participants represent—from Mexico, Sweden and Germany to name a few, all talked about how they've grown and learned so much from their involvement with Up With People. This exposure of different nationalities and cultures was the running theme throughout the concert.

The program was completely manned by participants of Up With People, from production, to set design and performers. The performance highlighted Up With People's local sponsors, primarily Zest-O Corp and RC Cola, who have long been advocates of changing Filipinos lives for the better.

Local charities and non-profit organizations which Up With People has collaborated with were also recognized.

Two of these non-profit organizations, namely Kaibigan Ermita Outreach Foundation Inc and Erda Tech Foundation, shared the stage with Up With People performers, creating a powerful message of cooperation between cultures.

Up With People sang many songs from the countries that the delegates represented. One in particular was a Japanese song that was written specifically for the victims of 9/11—poignant proof of the effects of tragedy reaching out across cultures. Each of the songs was introduced by the country representative who explained its significance and their involvement with Up With People.

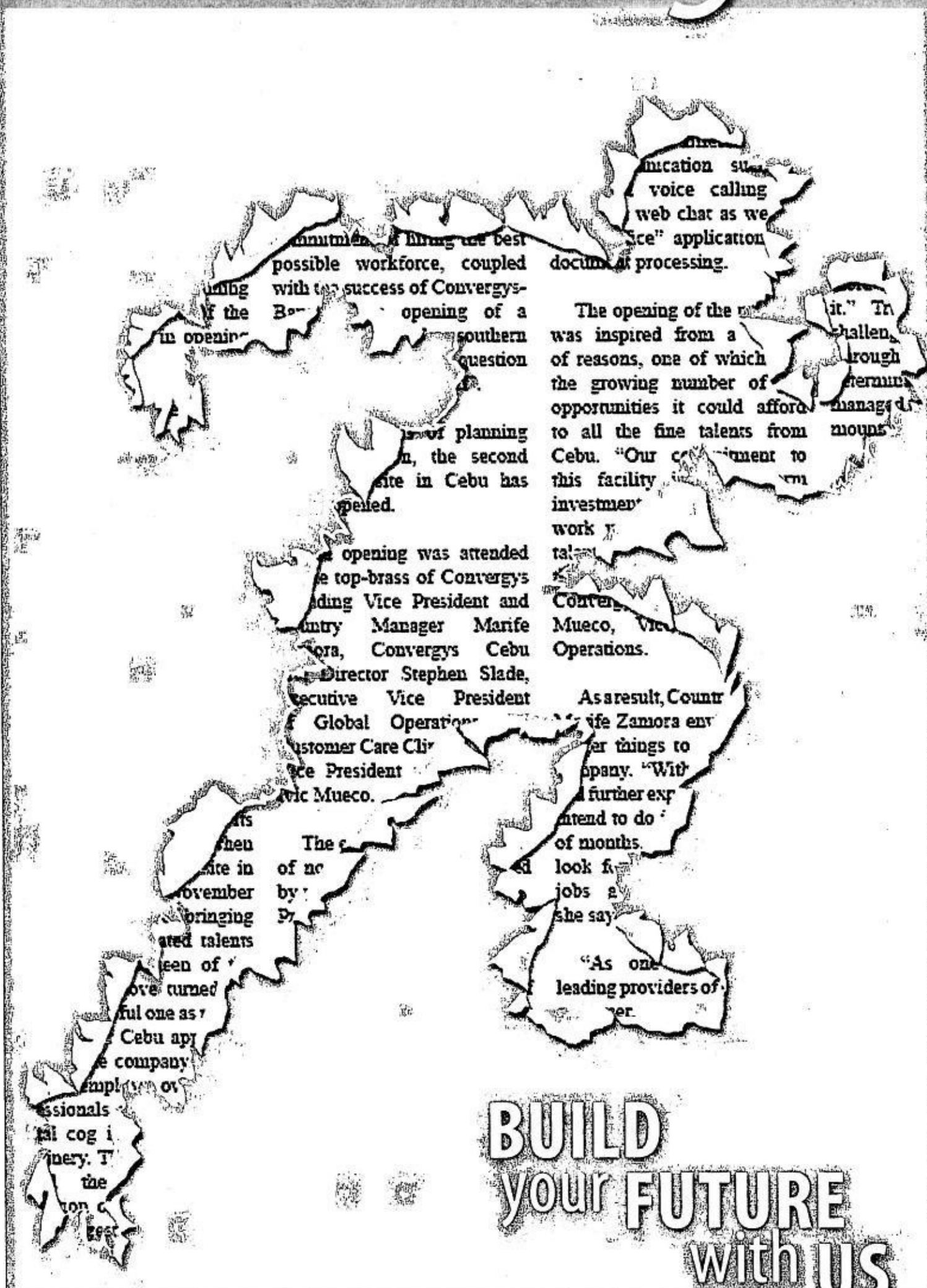
Keeping the performance lively, the cast danced along the aisles inviting audience members to sing and dance along with them. Some of the audience members were host families to the cast, making the event more intimate and enjoyable.

Up With People was given a standing ovation for their touching rendition of the Filipino song "Ulan", the final song of the show. This was the last main performance of Up With People for the year and is the culmination of their Philippine and global tour, with proceeds going to a local charity.

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Sales Team Leaders

Property Consultants

- Male or female
- 28 to 38 years old
- With extensive business and social network
- Has the necessary skills and experience to motivate and handle a sales team
- Must be ready to start on a full-time basis

- Male or female
- 22 to 32 years old
- Graduate of any 4-year course from a reputable college or university
- With very good communication skills
- Sales experience preferred but not required
- Must be ready to start immediately on a full-time basis

All successful candidates will be offered an attractive compensation package (allowance + commission), along with opportunities for unlimited income and continuous professional training and career growth.

Those interested may apply online by sending your resumé to dante.robles@newportcity.com.ph. Alternatively, you may visit our office Mondays to Fridays, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at the Newport City Information Center, Newport City, Villamor, Pasay City. Please bring your resumé with 2 ID photos. For more details, please call 855-2535.

If you believe that nurturing and caring for children are the cornerstones of human progress; and you want to work with others to overcome the obstacles that poverty, violence, disease and discrimination placed in a child's path; then join us in advancing the cause of humanity.

BUDGET OFFICER (BO/VN08-01) – at the UN National Officer Level 2

Supports in the management of budgetary and operational functions in the country office. Responsible for the overall management, control and monitoring of the integrated budget (programme and support), oversee system implementation, maintenance, security and troubleshooting and validate proper application of established budget and finance policies and procedures related to direct payments/cash assistance including training of all staff in the internal systems functions, enhancements and features.

Essential Qualifications:

- University degree in Business Administration, Management or related field, supplemented by courses in Accountancy.
- Preferably a Certified Public Accountant with specialized training in accounting and auditing.
- Two years progressively responsible experience in budget, auditing, finance administration and office administration

COMMUNICATION OFFICER (CO/VN08-02) – at the UN National Officer Level 2

Responsible for the conceptualization, planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation of an advocacy and communication strategy to promote respect for children's and women's rights and support UNICEF's mission in the country. Focus on advocating the passage and implementation of laws and other policies to make the country compliant with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Essential Qualifications:

- University degree in Communications, Journalism, or Public Relations.
- Five years progressively responsible professional work experience in communication, print and broadcast media or interactive digital media, of which two years should be related to social development.

EDUCATION SPECIALIST (ES/VN08-03) – at the UN National Officer Level 3

Responsible for planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of assigned project(s) within the Education sector. Strengthen the response to education in emergencies. Assist in intensifying focused interventions in disadvantaged settings to demonstrate effective Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) and the Child Friendly School System (CFSS).

Essential Qualifications:

- Advanced university degree in Social Science or related field.
- Five years progressively responsible professional work experience at the national and international levels in programme management, monitoring and evaluation in a related field.
- Preferably familiar with the systems, policies and legislation relating to the education Sector

FUNDRAISING SPECIALIST (FS/VN08-04) – at the UN National Officer Level 3

Develop sales and fundraising strategies, and manage and evaluate the implementation of activities in the Philippines in order to raise funds locally that will support the country programmes. Responsible for the Private Sector Division's day-to-day operating activities, including fundraising income and product sales growth; expense, cost and margin control; and monthly, quarterly, and annual financial goal management.

Essential Qualifications:

- Advanced University degree in social science, but preferably in marketing and/or private sector fundraising.
- At least 15 years work experience, with five in executive level position. Five years of professional experience in private sector fundraising, including familiarity with private sector fundraising methodologies: direct mail, corporate submissions, payroll deduction, planned giving (legacies, bequests, insurance), special events, and collections highly desirable.

All positions above require supervisory experience, excellent communication skills in English and Tagalog (both written and oral), advanced computer skills, and demonstrated ability to work in a multi-cultural environment.

Deadline for submission: **5 January 2008**. Fixed term contract will start on 1 April 2008.

Applications must be submitted online only. Send to hmanila@unicef.org. Please specify the Vacancy Code in the subject line. Kindly include your updated Curriculum Vitae along with a cover letter outlining your competencies and reasons for applying. Regret letters will only be sent to shortlisted candidates.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is committed to gender equality in its mandate and its staff. Well-qualified candidates particularly females are strongly encouraged to apply. UNICEF is a non-smoking environment.

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Australian Government

AusAID

CORPORATE RESOURCES VACANCIES

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) is responsible for the delivery of Australia's Development Cooperation Program to the Philippines. AusAID is seeking expressions of interest (EOI) for the following three (3) positions under the Corporate Resources Section:

- Senior Corporate Manager
- Finance & Budget Manager
- Human Resource Manager

Selection Criteria

The Corporate Resources section is responsible for ensuring that delivery of aid objectives are met through the provision of efficient and cost effective corporate management and administrative functions including finance and human resource systems/ support services.

The successful applicants will be Filipino citizens with relevant academic qualifications. Previous experience in corporate resource roles working with bilateral/ multilateral agencies, or international private sector organisations would be highly regarded.

Further details on job description and selection criteria for each of the positions can be accessed under job vacancies at the website: <http://www.philippines.embassy.gov.au/mnla/aboutus.html>.

Conditions of Contract

The Corporate positions will be full-time positions available on renewable two (2) year contracts. The successful candidates are expected to commence as soon as possible. Minimum monthly salary is at P105,640.00 for the Senior Corporate Manager position, and at P72,850.00 for the Finance & Budget Manager and Human Resource Manager positions. Salary is negotiable depending upon qualifications and experience.

Expressions of Interest

Applicants must provide a statement of claims (2-3 pages), addressing the selection criteria and should be sent to: **HR Officer, Development Cooperation Section, Australian Embassy, 23/F Tower 2, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Avenue, Makati City 1200 or manila.recruitment@dfat.gov.au** by close of business (COB) 19 January 2008. Statements should detail suitability to perform the duties of the position including personal qualities, experience, skills and knowledge relative to the selection criteria. Please include a curriculum vitae, and two (2) work-related referral letters (preferably from current supervisor and addressing the criteria). Do not send copies of academic transcripts, awards, degrees, or published papers. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

Envelopes should be clearly marked "CORPORATE /AUSAID". Only those selected for interview will have their applications acknowledged.

AusAID is an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) employer and maintains a smoke-free working environment.



Australian Government

AusAID

SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER AND PROGRAM OFFICER VACANCIES

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) is responsible for the delivery of Australia's Development Cooperation Program to the Philippines. AusAID is seeking expressions of interest (EOI) for several positions for **Senior Program Officer (SPO) and Program Officer (PO)** within the Development Cooperation Section of the Australian Embassy, Manila. The SPO and PO will contribute to the efficient and effective delivery of the development cooperation program through day-to-day management of ongoing activities and contracts, activity monitoring and reporting, quality policy input, and administrative support within a multi-functional cross cultural team.

Selection Criteria

The successful applicants will be Filipino citizens with relevant academic qualifications. Experience and/or knowledge of program/project development and management, preferably in areas of education and health, economic governance in the national and sub-national levels, disaster management and peace & conflict development issues would be highly regarded.

Further details on job descriptions and selection criteria for each of the positions can be accessed under job vacancies at the website: <http://www.philippines.embassy.gov.au/mnla/aboutus.html>.

Conditions of Contract

The SPO and PO positions will be full-time positions available on renewable two (2) year contracts. The successful candidates are expected to commence as soon as possible. Minimum monthly salary is at P72,850.00 for the Senior Program Officer position, and at P50,240.00 for the Program Officer position. Salary is negotiable depending upon qualifications and experience.

Expressions of Interest

Applicants must provide statement of claims (2-3 pages), addressing the selection criteria and should be sent to: **HR Officer, Development Cooperation Section, Australian Embassy, 23/F Tower 2, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Avenue, Makati City 1200 or manila.recruitment@dfat.gov.au** by close of business (COB) 19 January 2008. Statements should detail suitability to perform the duties of the position including personal qualities, experience, skills and knowledge relative to the selection criteria. Please include a curriculum vitae, and two (2) work-related referral letters (preferably from current supervisor and addressing the criteria). Do not send copies of academic transcripts, awards, degrees, or published papers. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

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FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION HEAD (Code: ADM-01)

- Male or Female, with a degree in Finance /Accountancy /Banking or equivalent
- At least six (6) years related managerial working experience
- Preferably with Masteral Degree
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills, outstanding mathematical reasoning, has leadership potential
- Should be computer literate
- Preferably specializing in corporate strategy or equivalent responsibility

TECHNICAL SERVICE INSTRUCTOR (Code: DND-01)

- Male, Licensed B.S. Mechanical Engineer
- With 3-5 years experience in the automotive industry
- Excellent communication and presentation skills
- Knowledgeable in training module preparation
- Customer oriented
- With professional driver's license

TECHNICAL TRAINING SUPERVISOR (Code: CBD-01)

- Male, Licensed B.S. Mechanical/ Electrical Engineering graduate
- With at least 3 years work experience in the automotive industry
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Customer oriented
- Expertise in mechanical and electrical aspect of vehicle repairs
- With professional driver's license

CUSTOMER RELATIONS OFFICER (Code: DND-01)

- Female, 21-30 years old graduate of any Business / Communications or related course
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Preferably with experience in customer service handling
- Team player, result-oriented, computer literate, knows how to drive

OFFICE STAFF (Code: DND-03)

- Female, graduate of any Engineering or Business courses
- Excellent communication skills, knowledgeable in MS Office
- Has a good learning attitude with or without experience

You may submit your application letter (with code) and resume at
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Deadline for submission is on January 11, 2008
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PRIVATE SECTOR MOBILIZATION FOR FAMILY HEALTH

Implemented by
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Bookkeeper

Organizational Background:

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Reporting directly to the Sr. Accountant, the Bookkeeper will assist in all phases of finance and accounting, and perform the following functions:

- Handles the payment processing of subcontracts' invoices & short-term consultants, Contractors, and Suppliers invoices, approved travel advances, liquidation of travel advances (where expenses exceed travel advance), office leases, insurance and employee benefits such as SSS, Philhealth, Pag-ibig, Health Care, and Life Insurance. He/she should check for accuracy, validity and complete documentation of all transactions.
- Monitor consultants & subcontractors' service agreement balances. Ensures that there are no double payment of deliverables and payment to Consultants are in compliance to the Service Agreement Statements.
- Reviews completeness of financial documentation of petty cash transactions
- Verifies grants, subcontractors, service agreements and suppliers invoices and make sure all supporting documents are received and correct.
- Ensures that disbursements have the approval of designated approving officer of the project and are duly receipted and received by payees;
- Maintain and Prepare Schedule of Per Diem Substantiation and ensure the accuracy and validity of each receipts for tax purposes; Submits to the Sr. Accountant Summary of Taxable Per diem of PRISM staff
- Prepares Overhead Summary and Receipts to be sent to the Home Office
- Prepares Monthly creditable Withholding Tax Summary
- Prepares the Peso bank reconciliation (ensures that the Outstanding Check Summary and other adjustment to bank reconciliation are submitted to the Sr. Accountant at the end of each month).
- Ensures a systematic filing and accounting of ledger back-ups, e.g. paid check vouchers for the purposes of examination and audit that may done anytime on the project
- Daily recording of transactions into the QuickBooks
- Maintains file of financial documents and transactions, ensure the completeness of the attachments
- Maintains updated tracker for VAT and assist in preparing VAT report.
- Assists Sr. Accountant in the preparation of bank checks and the deposit of checks to the beneficiaries' bank accounts; issues and sends signed checks
- Assists in the preparation of payroll processing
- Performs any other tasks as may be assigned

Qualifications:

- College graduate with a degree in Accounting
- Minimum of 2 years experience in general accounting and finance work
- Proficient in various computer applications, including QuickBooks
- Good command in written and spoken English
- Has a very keen eye for details

This is an URGENT NEED. Interested applicants should e-mail their application letter and CV at jobs@prism.org.ph on or before January 11, 2008. Please indicate the "Position: Bookkeeper" as the subject in the email.



Photo shown at left are Jacky Lyn Tecson, Renet Limisaco, Mr. Jesse Rebutillo and Jenelyn Garcia during the PICPA Seminar on Business Competencies at ABE-ICBA (Tacloban)



PICPA SEMINAR ON BUSINESS COMPETENCIES IN TACLOBAN.

Photo shown are Mr. Jesse Rebutillo of the Inquirer Classified Ads Division together with the Faculty and Students of ABE International College of Business and Accountancy (Tacloban) during the Seminar on Business Competencies held on Nov. 30.

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QUALIFICATIONS:

- 22 to 35 years old
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Management Systems International (MSI) project with offices in Salcedo Village, Makati, is looking for a

Network Security Specialist

The successful candidate will be needed for an initial period of three months. The Network Security Specialist should have the following qualifications:

- Has extensive LAN/WAN design experience
- Has designed both Frame Relay and Internet network infrastructures
- Willing to travel throughout the Philippines

The Network Security Specialist shall perform the following functions:

- provide an assessment of the following:
 - network requirements based on the overall plan
 - current security and speed of the network
 - cost effectiveness of the proposed UTM boxes/ Security Appliance
- provide recommendations on the security and speed of the network, which includes:
 - revise local area network design, if necessary
 - monitor the installation of the network security
 - inspect and test the network once completed

Assistant Customs Component Manager (ACM)

The person being considered for the position ideally has experience in USAID-funded technical assistance projects, particularly in the area of customs and trade. As part of the Bureau of Customs-Run After The Smugglers (BOC-RATS) Component Team, the Assistant Component Manager (ACM) shall work closely with the Senior Customs Advisor, the Component Manager (CM), the Deputy Component Manager (DCM), the Bureau of Customs (BOC) counterparts, subject-matter experts/consultants and the Millennium Challenge Account-Philippines Threshold Program Technical Assistance Project (MCA-PTTP TAP) team to facilitate the following:

- Project Planning and Initiation
- Project Management
- Configuration of Functional Environment
- Evaluation

The ACM shall provide support to the CM and DCM in managing the eight technical assistance (TA) areas under the BOC-RATS component.

Administrative Assistant

The Administrative Assistant reports to the Office Coordinator and will provide administrative support to the Project Team. He/She will maintain administrative systems including, but not limited to, communication logs and filing system; prepare project correspondence as necessitated by his/her supervisor; formats and presentation using the appropriate computer software; assists in the production of reports and presentation materials; assists with the commodity procurement. Inventory and general logistics for the project; assists Component Team members in arranging travel, hotel accommodations for all project related travel; assists in coordinating the logistics for all project events, including conferences and trainings and perform other duties as required.

The Administrative Assistant must have at least 3 years professional experience.

Interested applicants, please send in your applications to cpontoy@msl-mca.com or at Room 2302, 23/F, Sedeño, corner Valero Sts. Salcedo Village, Makati City 1227 Tel. Nos. 887-7412; 887-7467 to 69. For Network Security Specialist, deadline of submission is on or before December 28, 2007. For Assistant Customs Component Manager and Administrative Assistant, is on or before December 31, 2007.

DOLE issues advisory on pay rules

THE DEPARTMENT OF Labor and Employment issued an advisory providing for the pay rules on Dec. 24 and 31, which were declared special non-working days, and on Dec. 25, (Christmas Day), Dec. 30 (Rizal Day) and Jan. 1, 2008 (New Year's Day), which are regular holidays.

Dole Secretary, Arturo D. Brion, said, by virtue of Proclamation Nos. 1211 and 1353 issued early this year by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo which declared Dec. 24 and 31, 2007 as special non-working days, the following rules shall apply:

a) if the day is unworked, the "no work, no pay" principle shall apply unless there is a favorable company policy, practice or collective bargaining agreement (CBA) granting payment of wages on special days even if unworked;

b) If the day, however, is worked, the pay is the employee's daily rate plus thirty percent (30%) for the first eight (8) hours, and for work in excess of 8 hours, plus 30% of the hourly rate on the said day;

c) If the day falls on the employees' rest day and is worked, the employee's daily rate plus fifty percent (50%) shall apply on the first 8 hours of work, and for work in excess of 8 hours, plus thirty percent (30%) of the hourly rate for that day.

The Dole chief also said that for the regular holidays on Dec. 25 and 30, 2007, and Jan. 1, 2008, falling on an employee's regular workday, he or she shall receive 100% of the regular daily rate even if unworked, and if an employee worked on such regular workday, he or she shall receive two-hundred percent (200%) of the regular daily rate for the first 8 hours and for work in excess of 8 hours, plus 30% of the hourly rate for that day.

If the day falls on the employee's rest day, Secretary Brion said that an employee shall also receive 100% of the regular daily rate, even if unworked, and if the day is worked, he or she shall receive 200% of the regular daily rate plus 30% for the first 8 hours, and for work in excess of 8 hours, plus 30% of the hourly rate for that day.

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'I want a boyfriend but I'm a plain Jane'

I'M 32 YEARS OLD AND STILL single because I'm a very plain Jane. I'm brown of complexion, with slightly bulging eyes, pimples and thick lips. I'm described as an "IT nerd" but this recognition does not at all make me happy because what I want is to have friends, and most of all, a boyfriend. I work as a specialist in the IT department of our company where I've been working for 10 years now. I feel I don't belong because nobody invites me anywhere on Friday evenings and on weekends. I never have fun with friends of my own.

Is my situation hopeless? Please help me.

Ms Hopeless Nerd

You feel helpless about your physical condition and your social situation, and hopeless about whether you can have friends, be invited by them to go out, and to have a boyfriend. You are very conscious about your physical appearance; as a result you withdraw from social contacts and, in your withdrawal, you are perceived as unfriendly and that you want to be by yourself. It's a chicken-egg situation: your self-consciousness about your plain appearance makes you withdraw from social contacts; this creates an image among your office-mates that you don't want to spend time with them, and this makes them withdraw from you. Your not having friends and a boyfriend is not because of your looks but because of your attitudes and behaviors.

Well, the good news is that your problem is in your head and to solve your problem requires you to remove the negative contents in your head which you yourself placed there, and replace them with positive ones. That is, you need to have a paradigm shift from thinking,

ASK YOUR
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Josie O.
Santamaria



"I'm a very plain Jane; I'm unattractive; nobody likes to be my friend; I cannot have a boyfriend because of my unattractive appearance," etc. to "I'm not a very plain Jane; God was pleased with me when He created me and loves me for who I am; I can look attractive and improve my physical appearance; there are people out there and products to use to help me improve my looks; I can have an attractive personality; I can have friends and have a boyfriend if I can look and act friendly by smiling at people while looking at them eye to eye when I speak to them and when I listen to them," etc.

You only have to look around to see couples where the women are also "plain Janes" but have strong marriages to see that you have a wrong mindset that you are "still single because you're very plain Jane."

Yes, there are people who can help you improve your physical appearance.

They are as follows:

1. Dermatologist to help you with your skin problem and to improve the texture of the skin of your face
2. Cosmetic surgeon who can make improvements with your eyelids, your nose, the shape of your lips, etc.
3. Beauticians who can:
 - do a makeup/makeover to improve your facial appearance including fixing your eyebrows, and make you look better to look at
 - change your hairstyle;
 - someone who can help you in choosing the right wardrobe;
4. Someone to help you



improve:

- the way you stand, sit, walk, etc.;
- the way you talk, and to show interest in people in social situations, etc.

In short, dear Ms Desperate Nerd, you have absolutely no excuse to look the way you LOOK now. When you improve your physical features, you are exercising stewardship over what God has given you to improve and bring out the beauty within you.

As you do these things, try doing the following things to make people perceive you differently:

1. During meal times in the office, take a seat beside a co-employee and initiate "positive conversation." "By positive conversation," I mean talk to them about the positive in/about people, the improvements you see in the office, the improvements in the government, in the country, etc. Listen with interest as they agree or disagree with you. Do not wait for people to call or invite you. Take the initiative to invite yourself to them;
2. Know the birthdays and milestones of people in the

office—your boss, peers, supervisors, etc. Greet them warmly;

3. Befriend your co-IT talents like yourself. Join professional organizations of IT people and socialize with them. Your future boyfriend and later spouse could come from your ranks;

4. If it is your birthday, buy cake and drinks and give to your co-employees.

There are other things you can do to improve your appearance, your personality and character.

Try buying women's magazines to help you with beauty secrets, and books such as Dale Carnegie's classic "How to Win Friends and Influence People" and other similar self-help books you can find in bookstores.

May 2008 bring out renewed efforts on your part to look and feel better so that you can better appreciate and love. God bless you.

(The author is a professional psychologist. She is president of Career Systems Inc., a management consulting and human resources and organizational development company. Feedback at josantamaria@careersystems.com.ph.)

Gospel: Mt. 1: 18-24

"Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means "God is with us."

Motivating workers

By Bishop Precioso D. Cantillas, SDB, DD

MANY COMPANIES OR BUSINESS WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF the Christmas season not only to improve on their production or sales, but also on boosting the morale of their staff, employees and everyone in the workplace by giving bonuses or gifts or by having a celebration together. The underlying or hidden reason for the season's festive atmosphere is the great event of the birth of Jesus—God becoming man, or "God is with us." Yet, it is a very common experience that the reality of God being with us remains normally "hidden" in these joyful celebrations or it is being "covered" by the frills of the exciting moments. Even in big Christmas celebrations—big expenses in terms of time, money and effort—very little is done to make everyone conscious and aware of the abiding presence of God in every minute of our day and in every place of our work.

We could say with great certainty that God's being with us means He is working with us. He is present when we work and that He is at our side as we do our jobs. God's presence in our life and work is real even when we are not aware of it. He gives us the strength to bear all the difficulties, provides us the energies to carry on with our jobs even when we don't feel His divine powers. But, when we give attention to this reality we would certainly feel secure and even strongly motivated to work harder than usual.

The thought of working with someone great or working for him-like a rich and noble employer, a renowned and dependable company, or a famous personality—could normally boost the worker's ability to perform in an excellent manner. Time and effort spent by the individual or by the company to promote and keep always the spirit of God's presence in the work and in the workplace would therefore be most profitable for all. (E-mail the author at preciousbishop@yahoo.com)



REFLECTIONS
FOR THE
WORKING SOUL



Joseph the midwife

By Teresa R. Tunay, OCDS

FOR TODAY, ALLOW ME TO DIVERT FROM OUR USUAL WORK-related reflections to just this very timely one. God at times uses the oddest things to remind us of a truth that is furthest away from our minds. In the bible, He uses the ass of Balaam to speak; if He chooses to use your pet dog, a butterfly, a religious image, or a TV show to move your heart or open your eyes, who are you to question that? He is God, after all. He can even use a movie if He wishes, as He did with "The Nativity."

By its title alone, we know it must be about the birth of Jesus. Of course, the climax of the movie is near the end, when Jesus is born. The newborn babe, still bathed in blood, is shown in the hands of Joseph. That single powerful shot triggered in me a barrage of thoughts which I had never pondered before: Joseph served as the midwife at Jesus' birth! Remember they were alone at the stable—no inn would receive them? So who helped Mary deliver? Who cut Jesus' umbilical cord? Who wiped up the baby? Who cleaned the "delivery table"? Who put away the bloody clothes? But what really struck my heart was, the sight of the bloody newborn—because it reminded me of the humanness of Jesus. Just like you and me, he was born of a human mother, in blood and water; so Jesus had a navel, too!

Before that movie I had taken for granted the humanity of Jesus' birth. Like everybody else I'd been exposed to the nativity scene in Christmas cards, stampitas, belens and paintings through the ages which show a clean and radiant Baby Jesus in a manger, adored by the magi and the shepherds. Then all of a sudden he's on the movie screen, all covered in blood. He is indeed Emmanuel—God with us! (E-mail the author at teresa_de_manila@yahoo.com)

Strong link between employee engagement and business success

COMPANIES WITH EMPLOYEES who understand the organization's business goals and are motivated to achieve those goals can expect to improve their subsequent financial performance, according to the latest WorkAsia research study by Watson Wyatt Worldwide, a global consulting firm.

The WorkAsia study is an ongoing series of Global Attitude surveys on employee work attitudes and opinions about key people practices in the workplace. Based on surveys answered by 6,500 employees in 12 countries in Asia Pacific including the Philippines, the research is one of the most comprehensive and statistically representative studies on the subject matter.

Watson Wyatt defines "engaged employees" as those who have internalized the organization's business goals, the steps required to achieve those goals and further understand how their contributions drive results, according to James Matti, managing consultant of Watson Wyatt Philippines. "They have a strong desire to participate in the company's success."

It is crucial for companies seeking to develop strategies for building employee engagement, to know the top drivers of employee engagement and how these affect productivity, retention and financial performance.

The WorkAsia study helps employers identify areas of improvement in order to increase employee engagement and effectiveness thus enhancing the

organization's financial performance.

The top three drivers of employee engagement identified by the WorkAsia study for the Asia-Pacific region are customer focus, compensation and benefits, and communication. "These drivers are remarkably consistent within the Asia-Pacific region and around the world, with only slight variation across countries," according to Carlo Felicia, an associate consultant in the Manila office.

Key findings

The key findings of the study are:

The top driver in the Philippines is: customer focus. Filipinos believe that organizations that know how to satisfy their customers tend to be more successful. The other two key drivers are: compensation and benefits; and strategic leadership and direction.

Filipino employees need to trust in the decisions of their business leaders since these will personally impact their economic stability and livelihood. But trust alone is not enough. They also need adequate pay and benefits so they can sustain themselves and those dependent on them. Companies need to pay attention to these areas more closely if they intend to fully maximize their human capital for achieving business success.

On the other hand, Filipinos generally rated their employers lowest in the two drivers: strategic leadership and direction; and compensation and benefits. This means that in the areas of significant impact, Filipino employers still need to improve to maximize their investment in their people

resources.

Favorable areas

The highest favorable areas for Filipinos are in line of sight or knowing the objectives of the company and respect in the workplace. Filipinos believe they have a clear understanding of the business goals and the steps needed to help achieve them. They also feel that they are respected in the workplace and encouraged to provide their opinions.

Aside from reporting on general attitudes of employees by country, the WorkAsia study is beneficial for individual companies interested in conducting organizational climate surveys to gauge their employees' perspectives, opinions, and more importantly, their engagement level. "What is unique about this study is that WorkAsia looks at issues from a fresh perspective—by segmenting the workforce by level of commitment and line of sight, rather than by a demographic slice, so that companies can focus specifically on the key drivers of engagement for each employee segment," said Mak Yuen Teen, director of Asia Pacific Research and Innovation Center.

"The WorkAsia study tells us that forward-looking organizations are replacing one-size-fits-all offerings with programs that target their most valuable employees. These efforts enable them to create a more productive and stable workforce," said Russell Huntington, director of Human Capital Group, Asia-Pacific.

Delivering the ultimate customer service experience

EVER CALLED AN ADVERTISED hotline for a product or service that really interested you, but then they put you on hold for a quarter of an hour? And then when somebody did pick up, it was to transfer you to a series of customer service representatives who can't seem to answer your inquiries in full.

Poor customer service could cost a product its desirability and also the patronage of customers. When this happens, brand building, advertising, marketing and service improvement measures go to waste in just an instant.

In the express service industry, customers look for connectivity, reliability and convenience in sending their shipments. They can know whether their express service provider matches these specific needs by looking at how the company's customer service department manages its calls.

TNT Express Philippines—the local arm of the global express giant—receives almost 3,500 calls a week, from phone inquiries to bookings to customer concerns. Handling such bulk poses great challenge, especially when the goal is to translate every call into 100-percent customer satisfaction. "There is no secret to the efficient handling of calls," says Veronica Villaseñor-Castro, newly appointed vice president for customer service.

Castro draws her experience from more than 19 years of being in the business of providing customer assistance. Having started as a customer service representative herself, Castro recalls how, during her early years in the industry, she would juggle five telephones ringing all at the same time. From the analog phones of yore, Castro and the rest of TNT moved on to employ the latest Symposium system in call routing and management. With automatic call distribution function, clients are assured that all calls will be answered in less than 10 seconds.

More than support technology, Castro firmly believes that a company

relies on its people to deliver what she calls the "the ultimate customer service experience." Castro shares basic work ethics that TNT's customer service staff employs to give clients such an experience:

Set clear goals. Whether it's converting every phone inquiry into a booking (booking conversion) or answering a call in less than 10 seconds, the goals are made clear to the team. Clear goals give clear perspective in doing every aspect of customer service—be it making a transaction or handling a complaint.

Equip the team. At TNT, CS training begins with an orientation of basic customer expectations, like shipments delivered on time, inquiries and apprehensions answered to their satisfaction.

The training includes a customer service-training module called CS MAX, which covers the technical side of the job—duties, product knowledge, systems orientation and organizational structure. Meanwhile, the communication skills of the trainees are further developed and strengthened through direct assistance and mentoring of the supervisor or a senior CS representative.

Rally towards being proactive. TNT's CS representatives are well-versed in the company's portfolio of products and services. This enables them to not just effectively provide clients with solutions that best fit their needs, but even to anticipate such needs.

Value feedback. TNT understands that customer feedback is one of the best ways to gauge service performance. Every month, TNT Express Philippines selects clients to participate in the company's Service Recovery audit. Clients who've encountered problems in their deliveries are asked to comment on the service rendered to them, and to provide feedback on how they think the service can be further improved. Soliciting client feed-



CASTRO

back proved to be successful in ensuring client trust.

The TNT head office in the Netherlands also conducts their own evaluation of each country unit by hiring a third party company to play "TNT customer." This "customer" evaluates the customer service performance of the country unit and duly notes strong and weak aspects of performance. "The Mystery Shopper exercise has been in use for the last 10 years. With the program, graded evaluation of the TNT country office starts the moment the "Mystery Shopper" dials the hotline, and ends when he or she puts down the phone," explains Castro.

In the most recent customer evaluation done by the head office, the customer service of the TNT Philippine unit received the highest grade in the following categories:

1. friendliness and attitude towards customers
2. overall image of TNT Express
3. ease of getting in contact with the needed TNT person
4. speed of customer services in answering calls
5. efficiency of the shipment order process
6. availability of needed solutions



EUROPEAN UNION DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO THE PHILIPPINES

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT STAFF

THE DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO THE PHILIPPINES is looking for a new staff member to act as support staff for its diplomatic mission in MANILA.

The vacant post is for a junior secretary in the personnel section covering such duties as providing administrative services in processing and maintenance of personnel documents, liaising with various government agencies, filing, document distribution, reception duties and switchboard operation, general secretarial duties including taking of minutes, keeping diaries, screening phone calls, organising meetings, making travel arrangements and handling correspondence.

The successful candidate will be energetic, hard-working person with initiative and a strong sense of responsibility.

The following qualifications are considered essential: Background in Human Resources Management, high computer literacy specifically in the use of word processing, spreadsheets, database, email, and good organisational skills, faxing, taking dictation and the ability to draft simple correspondence.

A perfect working knowledge of English is required and a basic knowledge of French would be an advantage.

Several years' experience in a responsible position in an international setting, ability to work in a multi-cultural environment and having knowledge of the European Union; and

- familiarity with Government, Diplomatic, and business circles.

Written applications for the above position together with CVs, Qualifications and Testimonials to be sent to:

Delegation of the European Commission to the Philippines, The Head of Administration, 30/F, Tower 2, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Ave. corner Gil Puyat Ave., Makati city, Metro Manila 1200.

Telefax: 02.859.5189 Email: DELEGATION-PHILIPPINES@ec.europa.eu

Deadline for applications: 4 January 2007



Mandom Philippines Corporation is one of the overseas subsidiary companies of Mandom Corporation, Japan, a highly diversified organization engaged in the distribution of hair care and cosmetic products. Gatsby is our flagship brand. We are currently looking for competent, success-driven, and service-oriented professional to play an important role in our dynamic organization.

SALES & MARKETING ASSISTANT

RESPONSIBILITIES:

The successful candidate must be willing to undergo training and orientation in Metro Manila for Three (3) months only. After the said training he will then be assigned permanently in Iloilo to handle Western Visayas region.

REQUIREMENTS:

- ✓ Preferably residing in Iloilo City or nearby provinces
- ✓ Male, 21 to 30 years old;
- ✓ Graduate of B.S. Marketing, or any business course;
- ✓ Smart, hardworking and creative;
- ✓ Must be highly motivated, a team player and can work with less supervision;
- ✓ With good interpersonal relation skills;
- ✓ Applicants must be willing to travel within Western Visayas region.
- ✓ With at least one year work experience in sales and marketing.

Interested applicants may send your resume to:

The General Affairs/HR Division
Mandom Philippines Corporation
18th Floor, 6788 Ayala Avenue
Oledan Square, Makati City 1226
Email address: gatsby@mandom.com.ph

We will respond only to shortlisted candidates.

WANTED IMMEDIATELY CHAUFFEUR

Incumbent will operate various vehicles to transport personnel to points throughout the country. Familiarity with Metro Manila streets is essential.

QUALIFICATIONS: Must have completed high school, at least three (3) years professional driving experience, preferably with a government or industrial/commercial establishment. Must have driver's license restriction code 2, 3 and 4 (attach a copy of your license) and able to drive both manual and automatic transmission vehicle. Must be familiar with locations of important offices, streets in Metro Manila and suburbs. Must have an excellent driving record. Must be able to pass full physical including eye and hearing. Must have strong interpersonal and team work skills.

COMPENSATION: Competitive salary (including mid-year and year-end bonuses), health and life, and retirement plan is offered.

APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED NOT LATER THAN DECEMBER 28, 2007

SEND LETTER OF APPLICATION WITH COMPREHENSIVE RESUME TO:

Human Resources Division
P.O. Box EA 423
1000 Ermita, Manila



Inquire about the JobMarket package at 897-8808 loc 514.



The country's widely read and circulated newspaper is in need of:

ACCOUNTING GRADUATES

- With at least 6 months to 1 year experience in General Accounting and/or Credit & Collection work
- Knowledge of basic computer operations
- Can work under pressure and with minimal supervision

COMPUTER ENGINEER

- Graduate of Computer Engineering / ECE
- 6 months to 1 year experience on this job
- Knowledge of computer operations system like Windows XP and windows 2000/ MAC OS X, desktop applications like MS Office, Open Office, Email client, Adobe Products
- Troubleshooting skills, Interpersonal skills, Communication Skills
- Knowledge in network

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

- College graduate preferable Fine Arts
- 2 years experience as Graphic Designer
- 1 year experience in publishing
- Knowledge in Photoshop, Pagemaker, Corel Draw
- Skilled in manual and computer based illustration, Page Design

NETWORK / SYSTEMS ENGINEER

- College graduate preferably Computer Engineering or ECE
- 1-2 years experience on this job or similar
- Concepts in Computer Networking
- Email & Internet Administration
- Linux, Windows 2000 or 2003 Server Administration and Development
- Citrix Administration, TCP/IP Network
- Database knowledge is a plus

REPORTER - DAY DESK

- College graduate preferably major in Journalism or Mass Communication
- Knowledge in Basic Computer operations
- Skills in Communication, Interviewing, Research & Writing
- Good Interpersonal skills
- Must have at least 1 year experience in news reporting

Send your application letter and comprehensive resume to:

THE HR MANAGEMENT SERVICES HEAD
Philippine Daily Inquirer, Inc.
Chino Rocas Avenue (formerly Pasong Tamo)
Corner Yague and Mascarido Streets, Makati City
E-mail: recruitment@inquirer.com.ph

JOB OPENING

10th flr AIC Center Escolta St. Binondo, Manila
Tel. Nos: 2308777 loc 402 or 404

Junior/Senior Account Executives (Corp. Sales)

- Male/Female; preferably 23-30 years old
- Graduate of any 4-year Business course preferably major in Marketing, Management, Computer Science
- Should be enthusiastic, self-driven, independent, with pleasing personality and can relate well with people of all levels
- Must have established network among former clientele especially in the field of IT, Tel cos. & the like
- Experience in Sales is an advantage

Interested applicants may apply personally @ the above address from Mondays to Fridays, 9:00 am to 3pm; or may e-mail your application to career@tri.ph

RETAIL SALES MANAGER

- College graduate
- At least 5 years sales experience, 2 years in a managerial capacity handling major supermarket accounts.
- With excellent interpersonal, management and organizational skills
- Must be strongly driven and results-oriented
- Male or female, not more than 35 years old

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES (for Imported Instant Noodles)

- College graduate
- At least 5 years experience in handling supermarket and grocery store accounts
- With experience in selling instant noodles and supermarket products to major supermarket and grocery stores
- Male or Female, 25-35 years old

Qualified applicants are requested to submit their comprehensive resume with photo to:

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

1344 Angono St., Makati City
or call Ms. Dorie Ramilo
Tel. Nos.: 897-6819 loc. 111 or 899-6439
or Mrs. Emily Gepilano at tel. nos.: 850-1803 or 807-2454

We offer attractive basic salary plus commission to successful candidates.



A full-service marketing firm

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Marketing Director (MD-02)

- Male, 28-35 years old.
- A graduate of Business or Marketing related course.
- At least, 3 years experience in marketing management.

Marketing Managers (MM-4)

- Male or Female, 25-35 years old.
- A graduate of Business or Marketing related course.
- At least 1 year experience in marketing supervisory.

Marketing Officers (MO-12)

- Male or Female, 23-30 years old.
- College graduate.
- Experience is an advantage.

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E-mail: communique.asia@yahoo.com

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For the following positions:

CORPORATE ACCOUNTS OFFICER

Responsible for generating / expanding sales revenues from existing portfolio of accounts (renewal business) and manages the accounts to ensure customer retention.

Requirements:

- Preferably Marketing or Management graduate or equivalent.
- 1 to 2 years experience in Sales industry
- Exceptionally good in accounts management with proven strong track record in sales
- Preferred skills: Project management, assertive and can work under pressure.
- Can establish good rapport with internal and external clients
- Good team player and can work with minimum supervision

- Willing to travel; track record in sales
- Excellent negotiation and presentation skills
- Strong leadership capability
- Male or Female, 24 to 32 years of age

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Responsible for the correct implementation of Member's healthcare benefit policy and the delivery of superior customer service at all times. Facilitates and monitors in-patient availments at hospitals within assigned area.

Requirements:

- Preferably Medical allied course graduate (except nursing).
- Fresh graduates are welcome.
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- Above average communication skills (both oral and written)
- Willing to travel
- Can establish good rapport with internal and external clients
- With high level of stress tolerance and can work under pressure.

SYSTEM ANALYST

Responsible for ensuring that the company's core application is running as designated. Responsible for maintaining data integrity of the core application.

Requirements:

- Preferably Computer Science graduate
- 2 years experience in system application
- Above average communication skills (oral and written)
- Can establish good rapport to internal and external client
- With high level of stress tolerance and can work under pressure

Please send comprehensive resume to:
julie.llanes@maxicare.com.ph
For more career opportunities, visit our website
www.maxicare.com.ph



Total Point Of Sales (POS)
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PROJECT COORDINATOR

- ❖ Male / Female; 22 – 30 years old; with pleasing personality
- ❖ A graduate of either Computer Science, Computer Engineering, Industrial Engineering or Business Management courses.
- ❖ Must be able to create and execute Strategic Project Planning and Project Implementation.
- ❖ Background in Software and Hardware Process Improvement and Protocols is an advantage.
- ❖ Can perform Documentation: Test Design, Test Plan, Test Scripts and Test Summary Report
- ❖ Highly organized and very analytical.
- ❖ Must have an excellent communication and presentation skills.
- ❖ Must have a strong Decision-Making and Leadership skills.

Interested applicants may apply personally or may send their resume with recent photo at the E-mail address stated below. Kindly Indicate the Position applying for as the Subject.

JIMAC INCORPORATED HRD DEPARTMENT

Penthouse floor TC Plaza Building near cor. Cordillera St. Quezon Ave.,
Quezon City. Tel No. 742-68-32/53/59- loc. 112 Fax No. 742-6634

E-mail Address:

hrd@jimac-inc.com visit our Website at www.jimac-inc.com

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034-4351715

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INQUIRER
PUBLICATIONS, INC.

PAYROLL STAFF

- College graduate (any business course)
- With 3 years experience in similar field
- knowledge of payroll system, SSS, BIR and other government regulations
- knowledge of Corporate Taxation Law and basic labor laws
- experience in bank payroll transactions
- Mathematical ability and analytical skills
- basic computer operations

Send your application (with photo) NOW to:

The Human Resources (c/o IPI)
PDI Building
Pasong Tamo corner Yague and Mascardo Sts.
Makati City 1200
or email to: jreyes@inquirerpublishings.ph;
spanlilio@inquirer.com.ph



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Email Add: addworkers@yahoo.com / TeleFax # (632) 5246388 / 5214731

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LICENSED ELECTRICAL ENGINEER; MINIMUM 10 YRS EXPERIENCE AS PLANNING & SCHEDULING ENGINEER; PROFICIENT IN PRIMAVERA PROJECT PLANNING PACKAGE; EXPERIENCE IN SUB-STATION/POWER PLANT CONSTRUCTION PREFERABLY WITH SAUDI EXPERIENCE

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LICENSED ELECTRICAL ENGR NUMERICAL/MICROPROCESSOR BASED ABB & SIEMEN DISTANCE RELAY; TESTING, COMMISSIONING & PROGRAMMING.

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS

LICENSED ELECTRICAL ENGINEER; MINIMUM 10 YRS EXPERIENCE; WELL VERSED IN SUB-STATION EQUIPMENTS INSTALLATION/ TRANSMISSION LINES; HAVE GOOD EXPERIENCE IN SUB-STATION/POWER PLANT; PREFERABLY WITH SAUDI EXPERIENCE

APPLICANTS MUST SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS WITH TWO (2) SETS OF RESUME, COPY OF DIPLOMA, PPC ID, BOARD CERT & OTHER PERTINENT DOCUMENTS TO PROVE QUALIFICATION. LOOK FOR DOLLY (2ND Floor) FOR MANPOWER POOLING / NO FEES TO BE COLLECTED
BEWARE OF ILLEGAL RECRUITERS

An export and import trading company
is in need of a

QC INSPECTOR

Qualifications:

- Male or Female
- At least 25 years old
- College graduate, graduate of an engineering degree will be an advantage but not necessary
- At least 1 year work experience in a similar position
- The work will involve travel to China so the applicant must have a passport
- Able to speak and write English well
- Good communication skills
- Experience in export buying office will be an advantage
- Hardworking, honest and willing to work long hours

Please e-mail your applications to:

sales@worldbizinc.biz

THANK YOU, THANK YOU
ANG BABAIT NINYO,
JI READERS!



Junior INQUIRER

WHAT'S INSIDE:

Looks like Santa's
not-so-little
helpers
have their
hands full!

Page 4



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2007 ♦ 8 PAGES ♦ VOLUME 10, NUMBER 91



By Denise Anne Castro

11 years old

Quezon City

The simple joys of Christmas

EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK, YOU KNOW IT'S CHRISTMAS. Glittering lights hang from trees and colorful lanterns adorn the windows of most houses.

But not Baby's house.

Thirteen-year-old Analyn "Baby" Corbo's family lives in Tondo, Manila. Their small house is surrounded by gambling neighbors, fishball vendors and stray dogs. Theirs is the only house in the area without electricity for they have no money to pay for electric bills. At night, they use a *gasera* (gas lamp) to light their overcrowded home.

Baby is the youngest of five children. Her father sells fish in Baywalk, while her mother stays at home. They barely have enough money to cover their daily expenses.

This Christmas, Baby's parents can't afford to buy her and her siblings gifts. While she dreams of having new clothes and a new pair of shoes, Baby understands their financial difficulties. She doesn't expect nor complain.

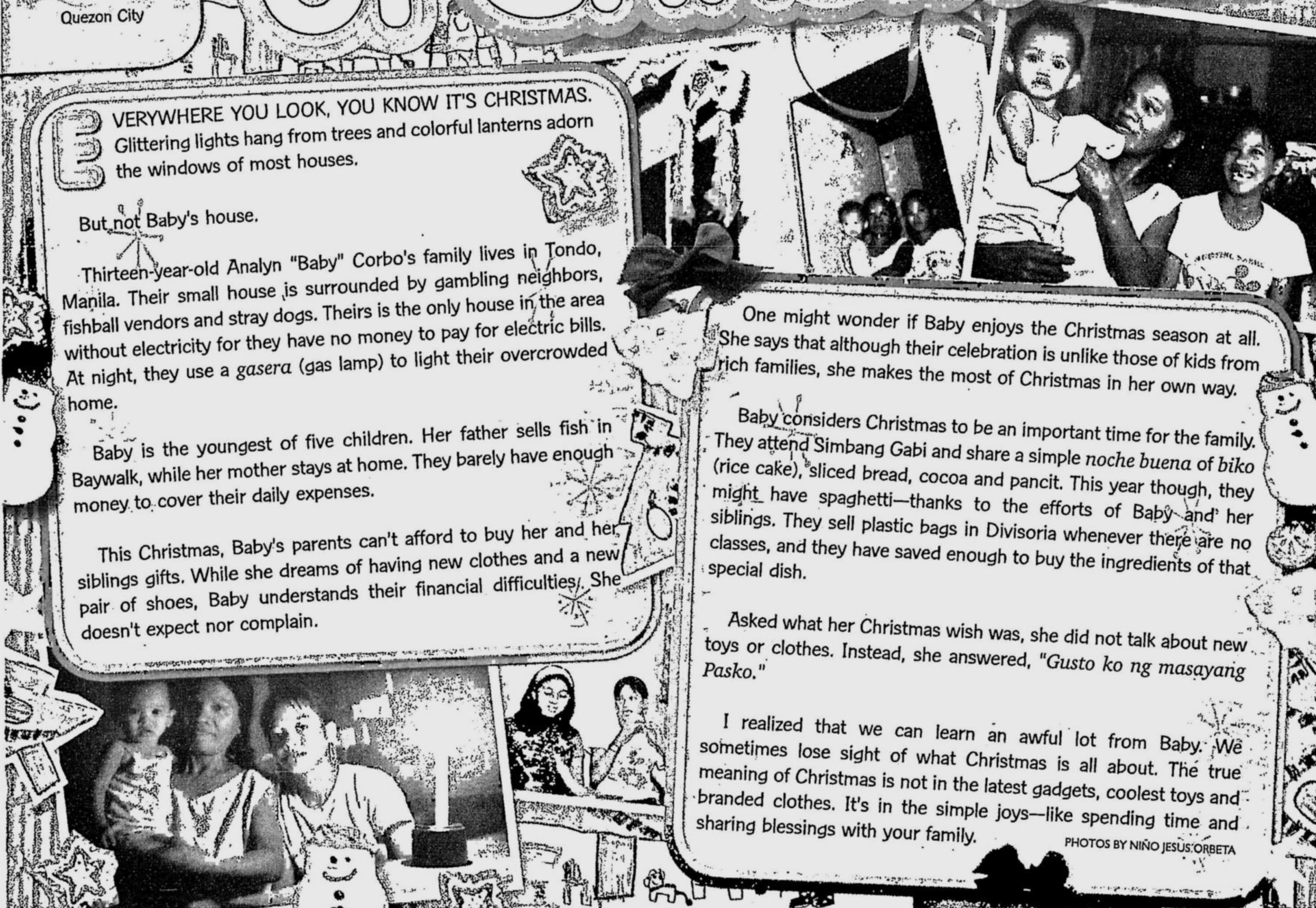
One might wonder if Baby enjoys the Christmas season at all. She says that although their celebration is unlike those of kids from rich families, she makes the most of Christmas in her own way.

Baby considers Christmas to be an important time for the family. They attend Simbang Gabi and share a simple *noche buena* of *biko* (rice cake), sliced bread, cocoa and pancit. This year though, they might have spaghetti—thanks to the efforts of Baby and her siblings. They sell plastic bags in Divisoria whenever there are no classes, and they have saved enough to buy the ingredients of that special dish.

Asked what her Christmas wish was, she did not talk about new toys or clothes. Instead, she answered, "*Gusto ko ng masayang Pasko.*"

I realized that we can learn an awful lot from Baby. We sometimes lose sight of what Christmas is all about. The true meaning of Christmas is not in the latest gadgets, coolest toys and branded clothes. It's in the simple joys—like spending time and sharing blessings with your family.

PHOTOS BY NIÑO JESUS ORBETA



Think Out Loud!

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST BLESSING THAT YOU GOT THIS YEAR?

All my grades got higher. It feels like all my hard work has been rewarded.

—Frances Gabrielle Alejo, 12, Manila

When my mom and dad gave me snare drums. I've been asking my parents for that for almost a year.—Jasper K. Adonis, 10, Manila

I was so happy when I received a yoyo watch because it can tell time and I could play with it.—Mark Christian S. Igaya, 10, Manila

I felt so blessed when most of my friends were allowed by their parents to attend my birthday party this year.—Ivan Frances E. Babila, 10, Manila

It was an honor to be chosen as a commentator in our class Mass. All my classmates wanted that job and I was the one picked.—Mea Elysa Katipunan, 11, Manila

A new baby boy in the family, my nephew.—Kayle Patrice Alejo, 11, Manila

Guyito's Corral

Welcome to my corral!

This is your own special space, where you can express your thoughts and feelings about anything under the sun in the form of essays, poems, letters and even illustrations!

Send all contributions to ji@inquirer.com.ph. Don't forget to indicate your full name, age and the city where you live. We'll be waiting!

Junior INQUIRER

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Telephone number: 897-8808 loc. 340 (Editorial) and 534 (Sales).

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2005 Best Children's Newspaper
Awarded Hall of Fame

When I read about the Philippine Eagle chick, I was really thankful that God used people to save the chick from suffocation. Deep inside, I am not that much of a fan of birds because I find some of them irritating. But when I read that short article, I found birds to be not that irritating anymore.

That day I learned that that we should start caring not just for ourselves, but also for the animals around us.

Frances Aldana
10 years old
Quezon City

We're glad you now appreciate animals more, Frances. Keep reading JI!
—JI Staff

YOU WIN!

Frances gets a Magic Bratz Ball! Is there any way for superstylin' girls to get fashion forward advice for the future? Totally! Ask this funky fortune-teller questions about school, boys, fashion or fun and you'll get some answers. Bratz Magic Ball is distributed by Ban Kee Trading.





DINO AUTOPSY.

Ever wondered how dinosaurs really look? How they walked on earth to hunt for food? Did they tower over tress and walked over other animals? Were they really green or brown just like the dinosaur cartoon characters? Were they capable of running as fast as cars? Catch National Geographic Channel's "Dino Autopsy" and watch as a group of paleontologists try to answer these questions and unlock the mysteries behind the evolution of these ancient reptiles. "Dino Autopsy" airs on Dec. 26 at 11 a.m., and Dec. 29 at 1 p.m. and 5 p.m., only on the National Geographic Channel.

TOYS AND COLLECTIBLES FAIR.

Collectibles Unlimited in partnership with the SM Megatrade Hall proudly bring you the 2nd Annual Toys and Collectibles Christmas Fair. The Christmas Toy Fair features the best selection of kiddie toys, dolls, action figures, die cast cars, licensed merchandising and high end collectibles this side of town. So troop now to SM Megamall's Megatrade Hall 2. The 2nd Annual Toys and Collectibles Christmas Fair runs from Dec. 21-23, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. For more details, visit the event website www.toycon.co.cc.

Disney PRINCESS

Get a limited-edition tote bag only **P35** with a minimum P500 purchase of Disney items from the Children's Wear, Children's Shoes and Character Shop departments. Now thru Jan. 6, 2008

Enchanted Tales

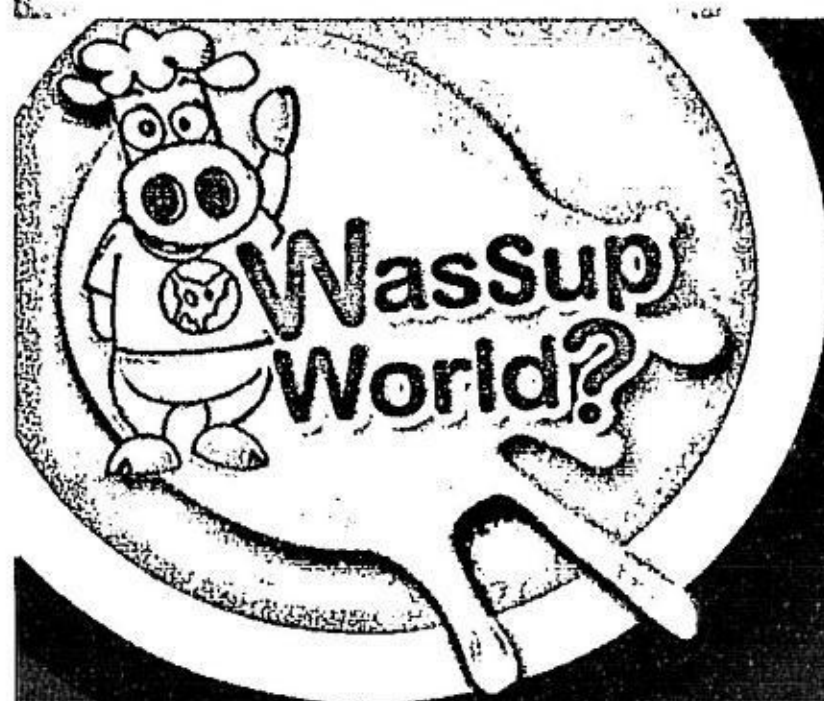
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We've got it all for you! DEPARTMENT STORE

At the children's wear and shoes departments.

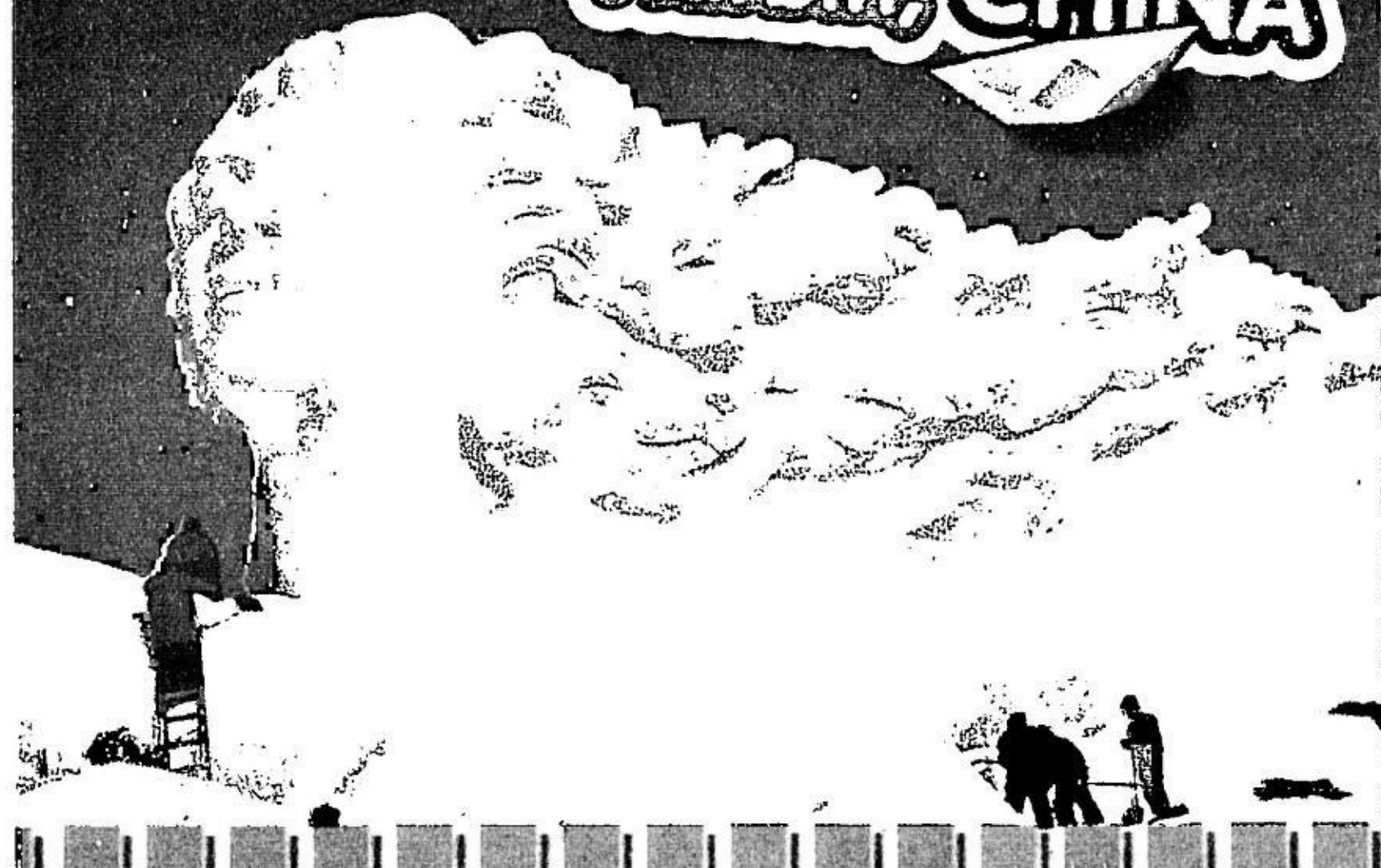
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Snow woman

WORKERS put final touches on this fantastic sculpture for the 20th Harbin International Ice-Snow Sculpture Expo. The expo is scheduled to open on Dec. 20 in the capital of Heilongjiang province. We hope they don't run out of snow! **AP**

Harbin, CHINA



Iloilo, PHILIPPINES

Lighting up Christmas

LIZARES mansion, now known as Angelicum School, lights up every year during the Yuletide season and attracts commuters and nearby residents at the Jaro district in Iloilo City. The structure, which was built during the colonial period, is well-known as one of Iloilo's distinguished heritage houses. **Arnold Almacan / Inquirer Visayas**



Dear Santa

AT the Santa Claus' Post Office on the Arctic Circle, people dressed as elves read letters sent to Santa from around the world. Anyone who aspires to be Santa's helper has to go to the new Elf Academy near the North Pole, which Finland claims as home to the "real" Santa Claus. **Reuters**

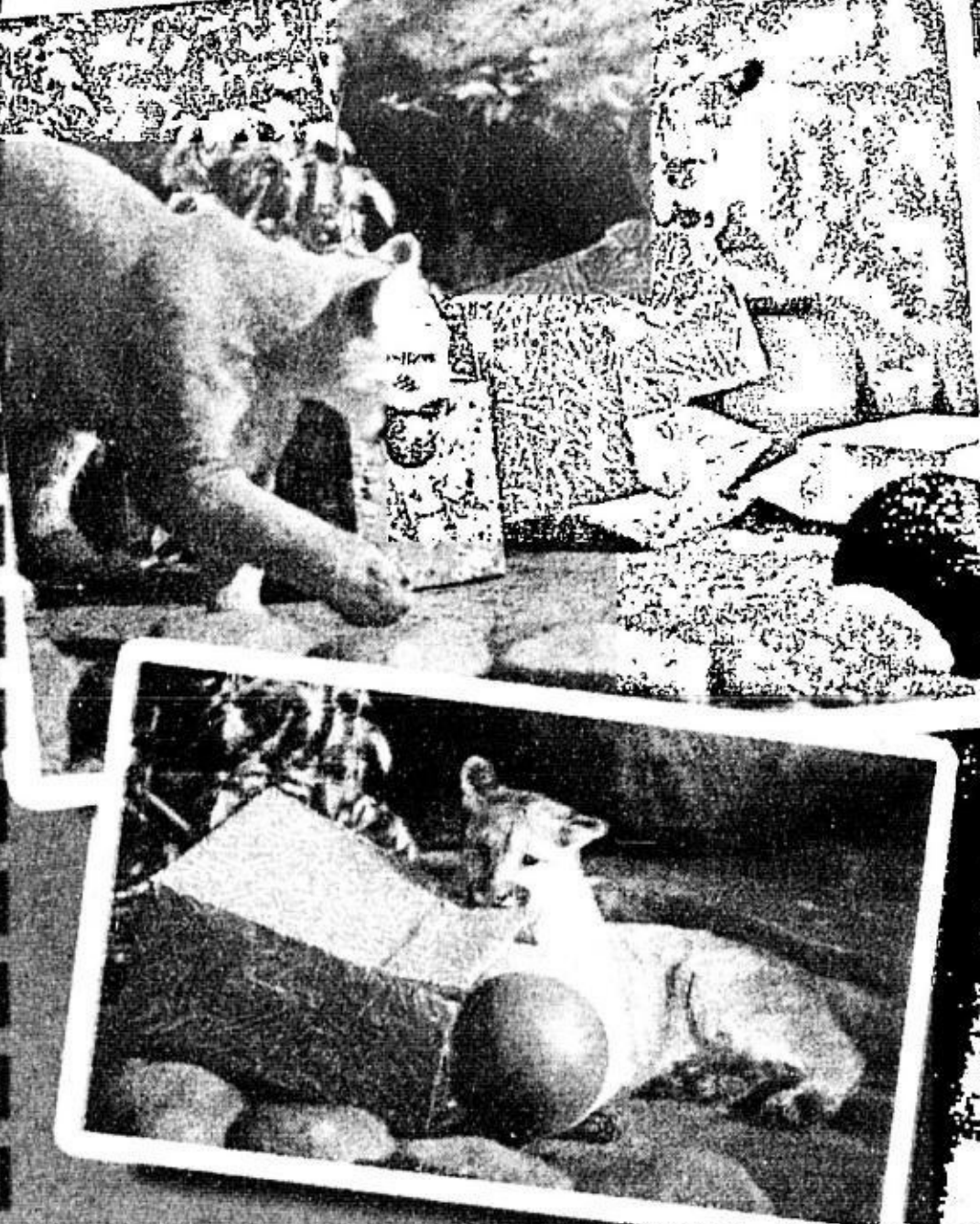
Rovaniemi, FINLAND



California, USA

We got gifts!

COUGAR cubs Ashkii, Takoda and Yazhi of the Six Flags Discovery Kingdom got a visit from Santa too! They were treated to presents filled with balls, pine cones, and other treats. The cougars were acquired by the park after being orphaned. **AP**



Quezon City, PHILIPPINES

Holiday lanterns

A LANTERN honoring Filipino national artist Benedicto Reyes Cabrera, more popularly known as "Bencab", is paraded by College of Fine Arts students before a huge crowd. The annual lantern parade at the University of the Philippines in Quezon City dates back to 1934 as a "fitting way to end classes for a long Christmas holiday." **AP**



BY LEVEL-UP GAMES

RAGNAROK

CELEBRATE THE RAGNA HOLIDAYS WITH NEW ANIMATED HEADGEAR: BELL RIBBON, FISH HEAD HAT AND SANTA POKING HAT! THEN GET AS MUCH AS 4X EXP UNTIL DECEMBER 26, 2007! FOR DETAILS, PLEASE VISIT [HTTP://WWW.RAGNAROK.PH](http://WWW.RAGNAROK.PH)

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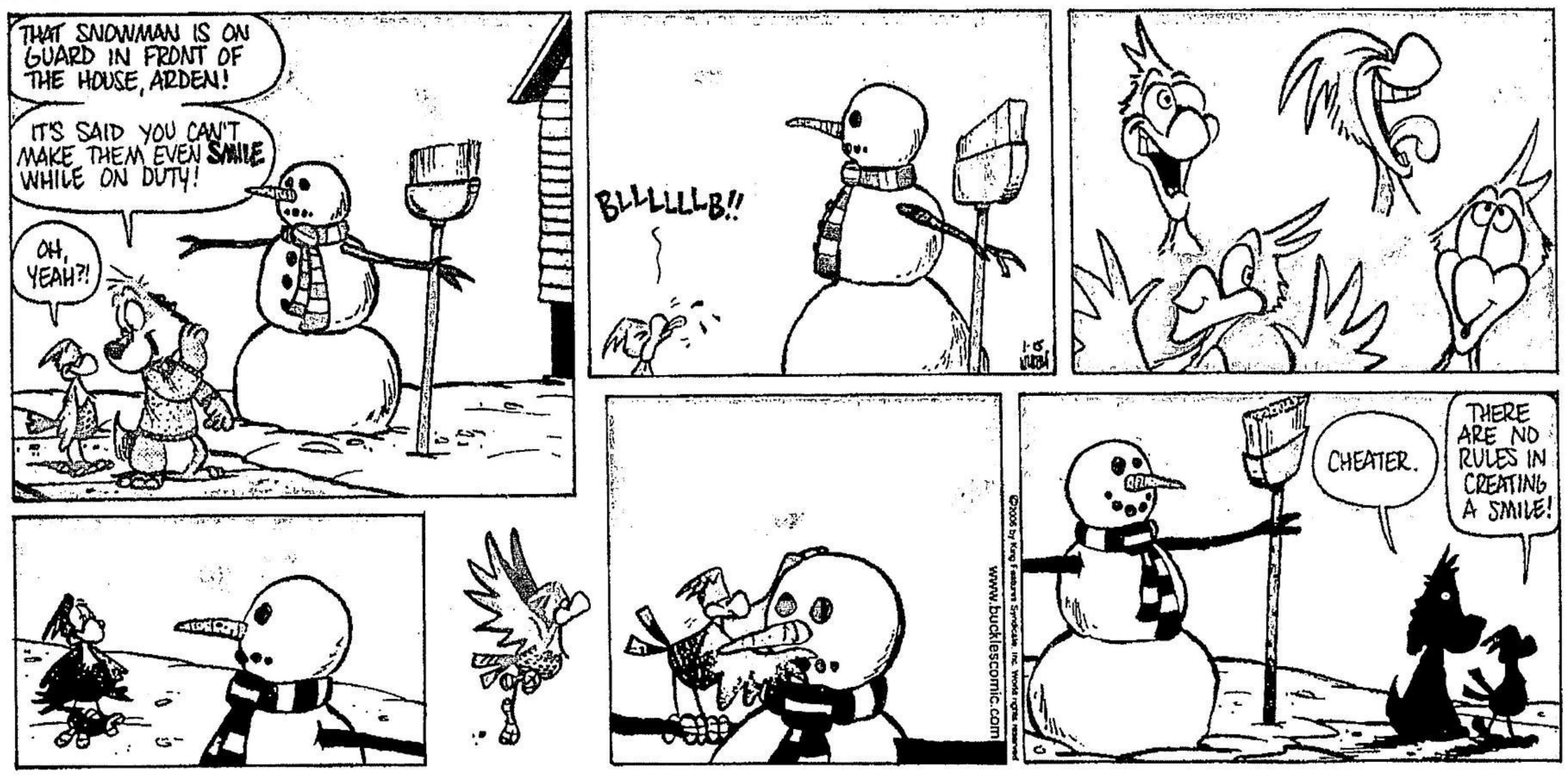
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BY POL MEDINA JR.



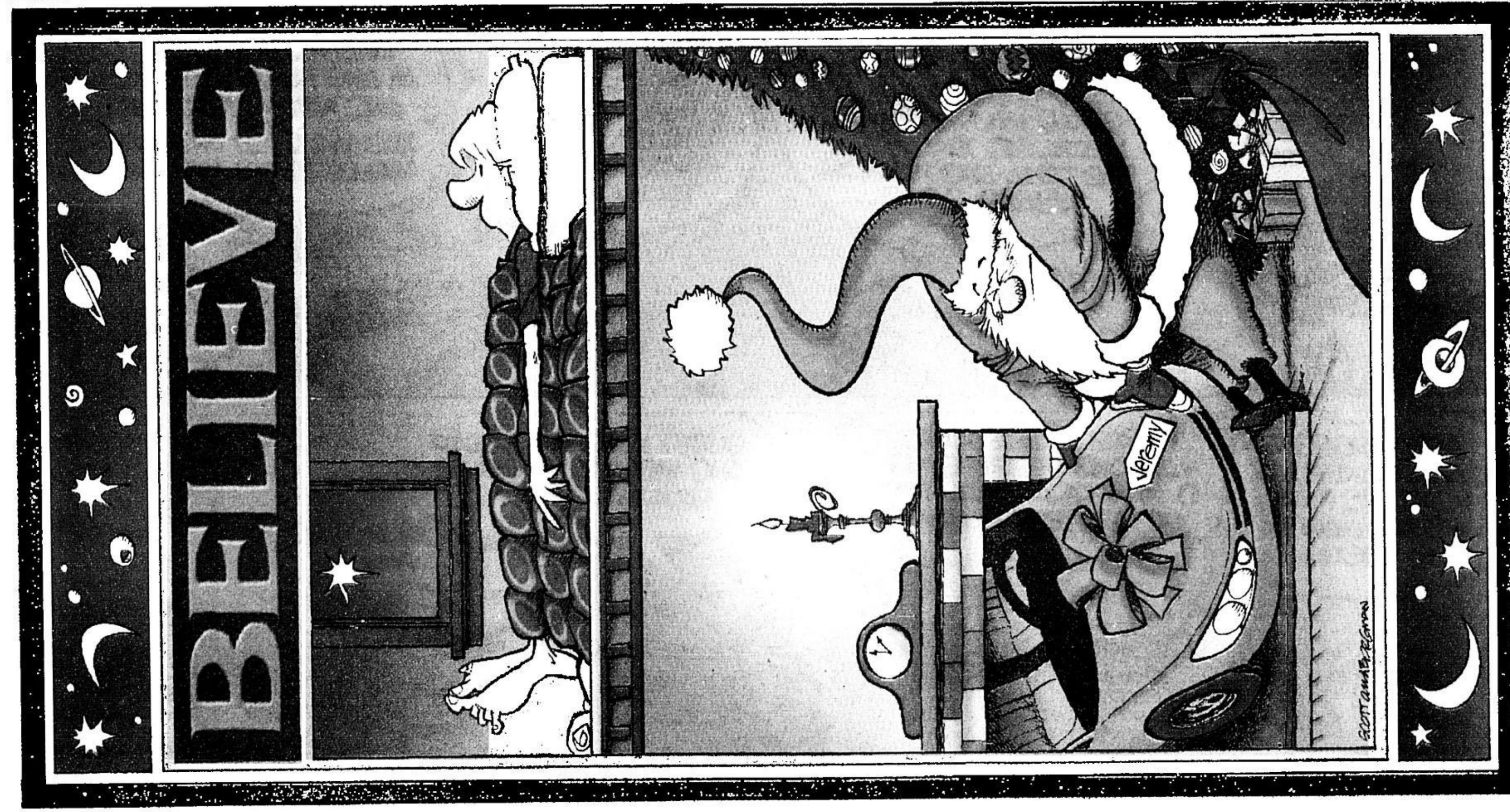
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ZITS

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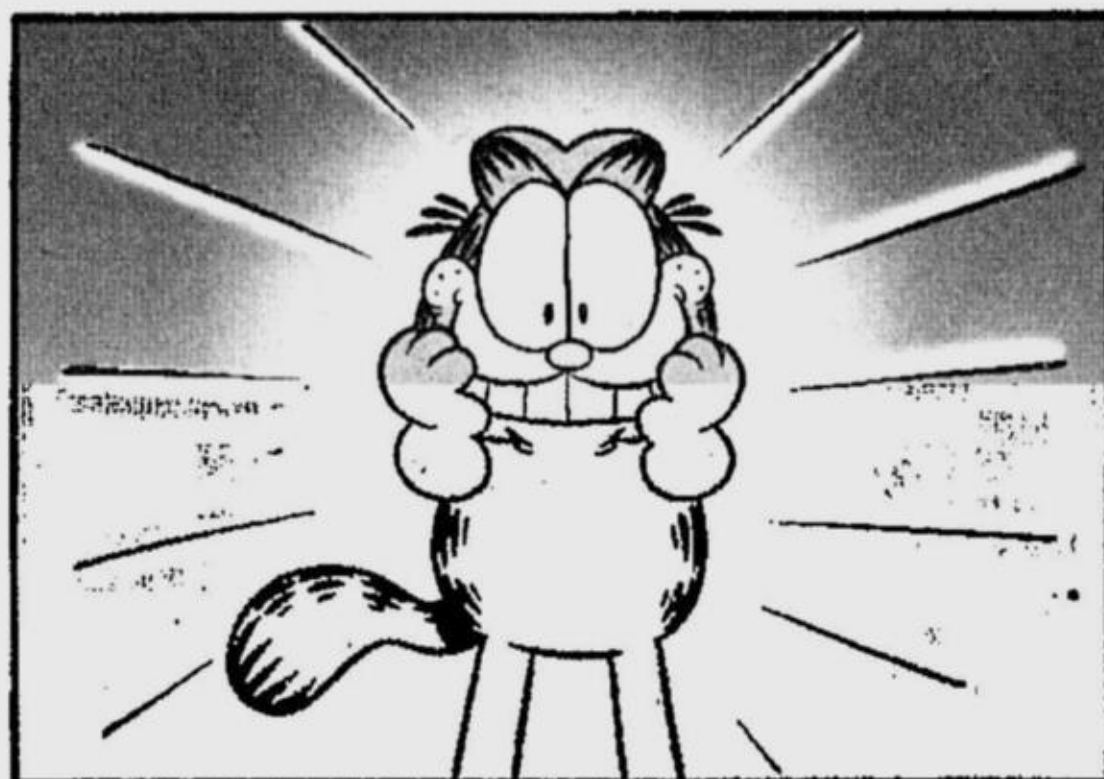
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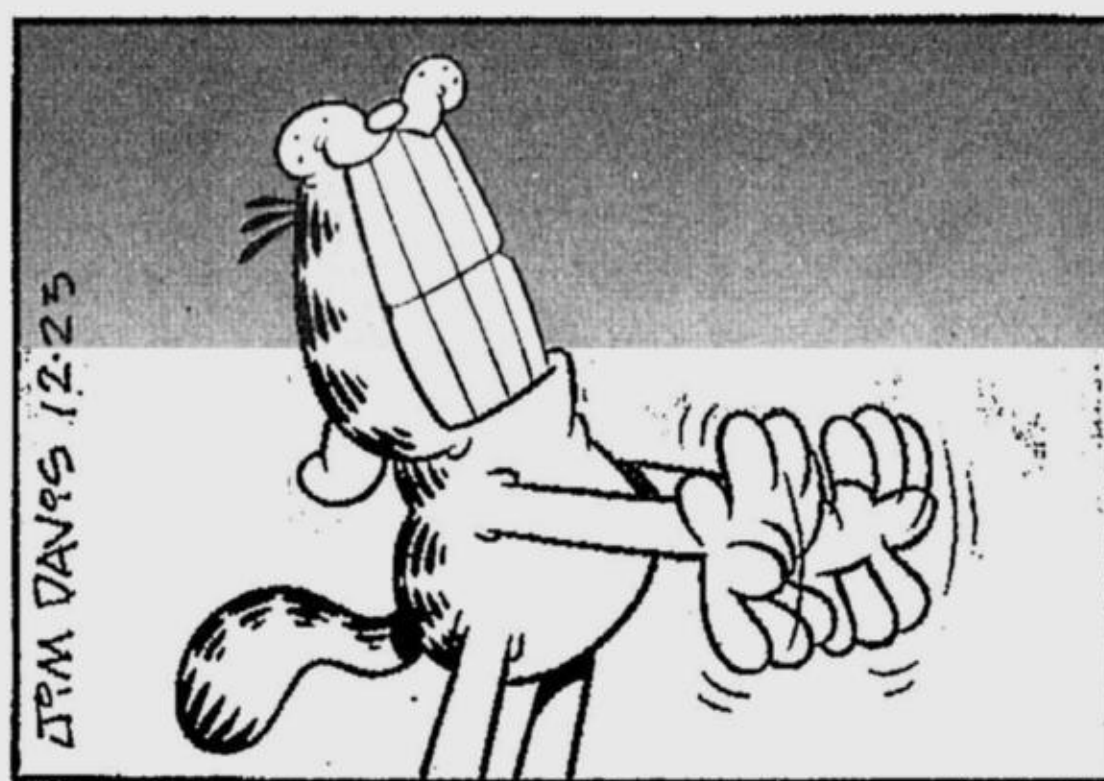
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GARFIELD

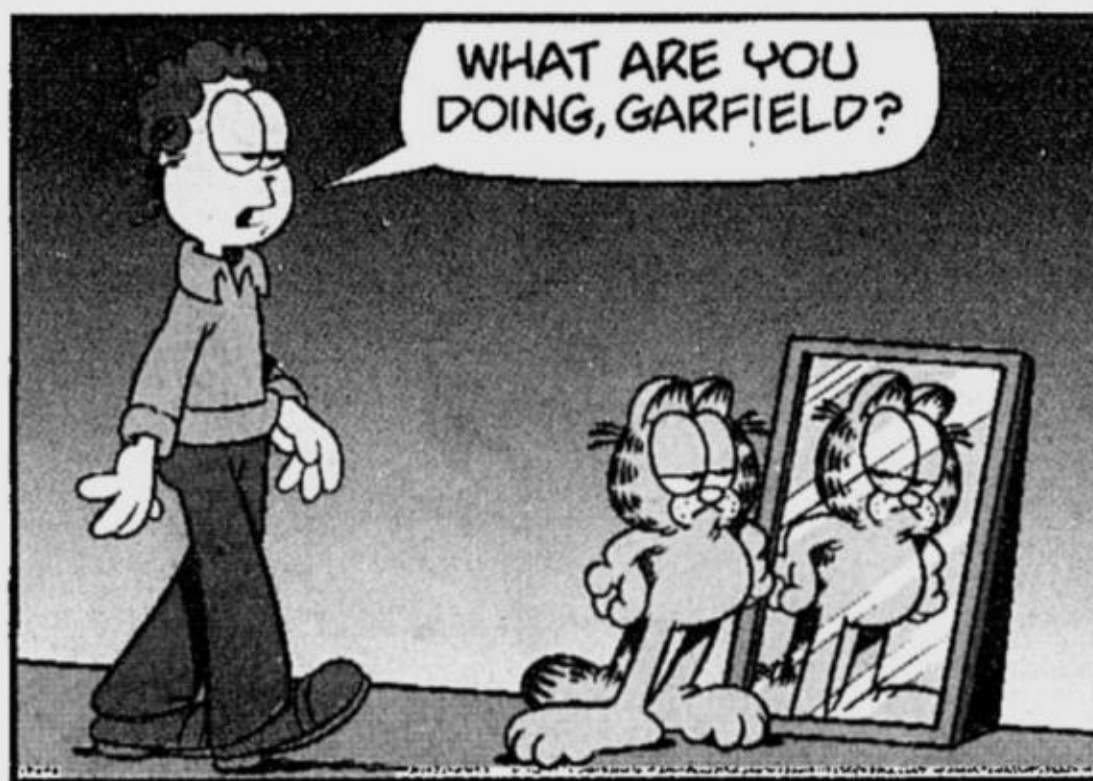
BY JIM DAVIS



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JIM DAVIS 12-23

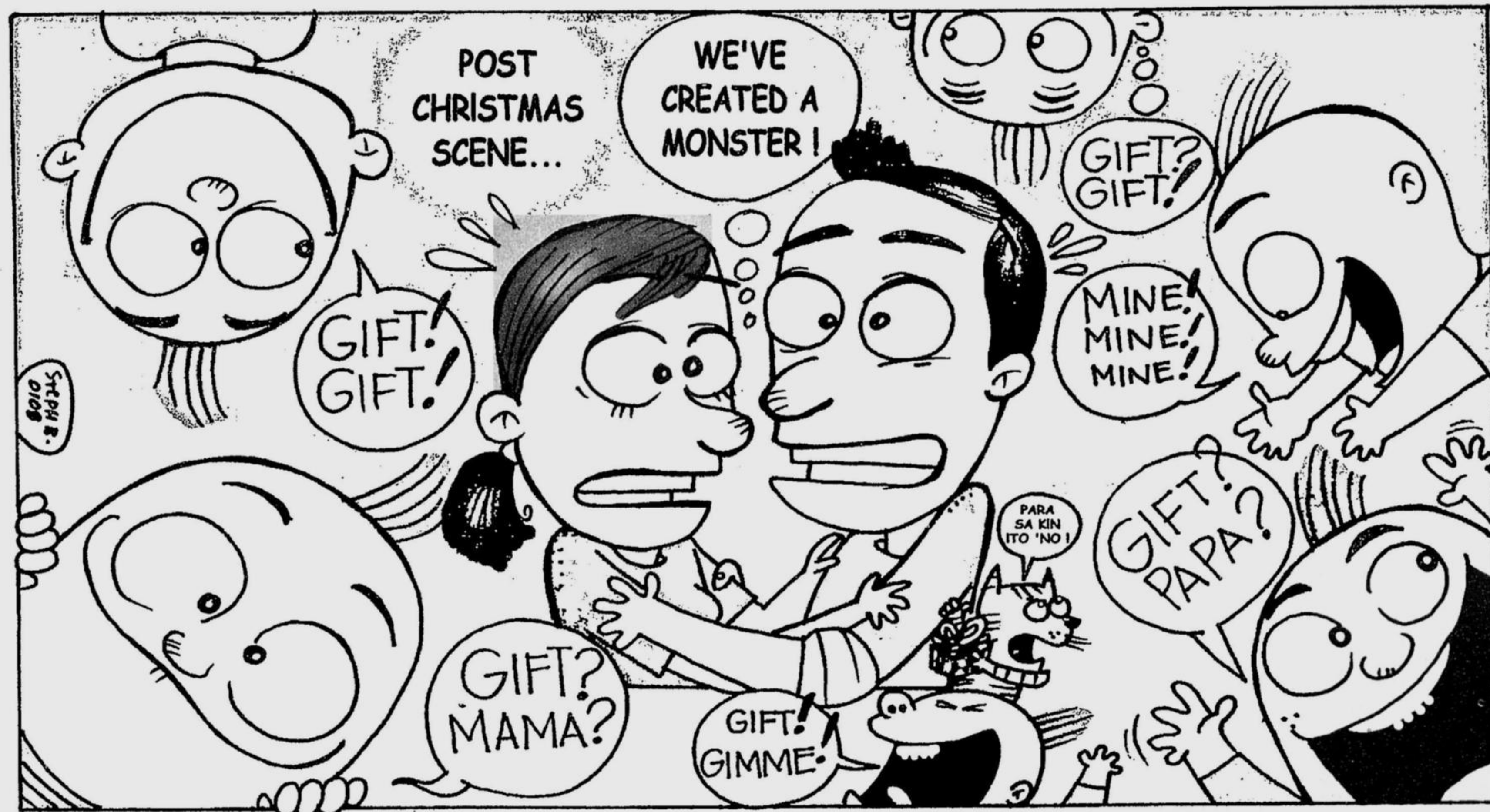


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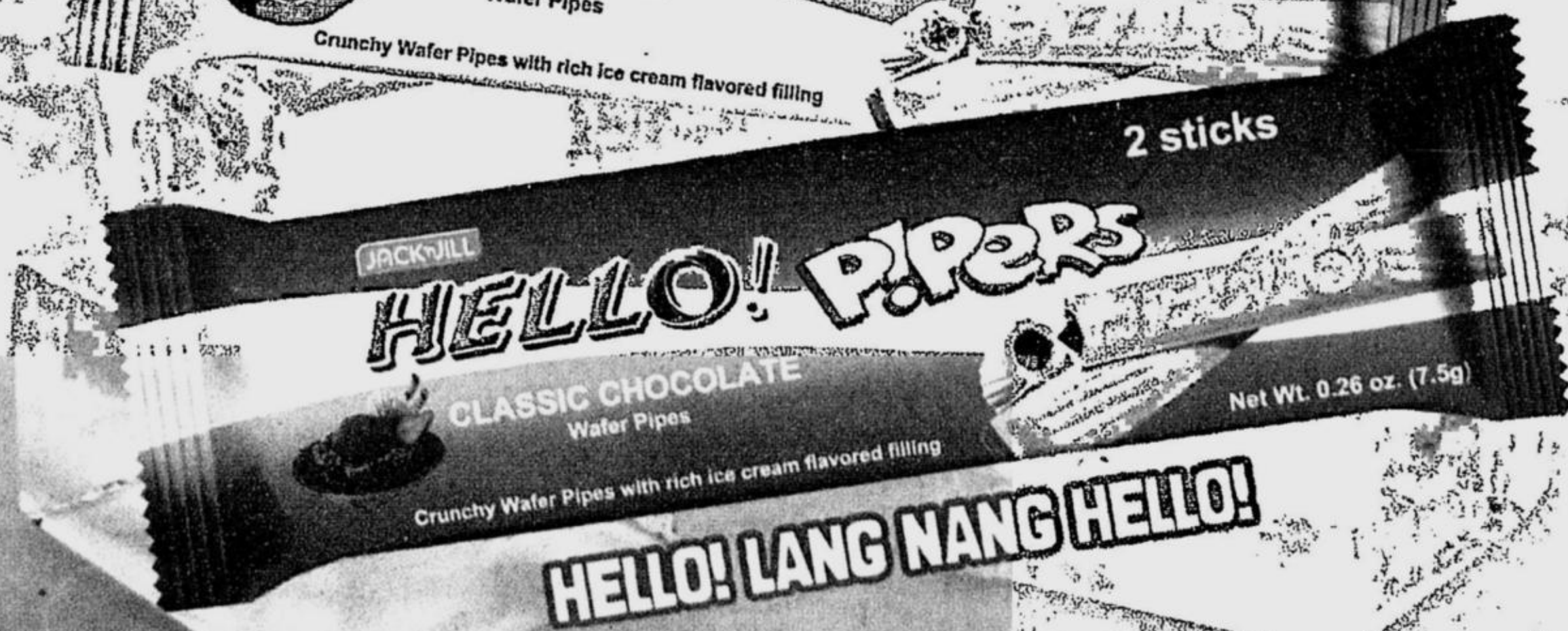
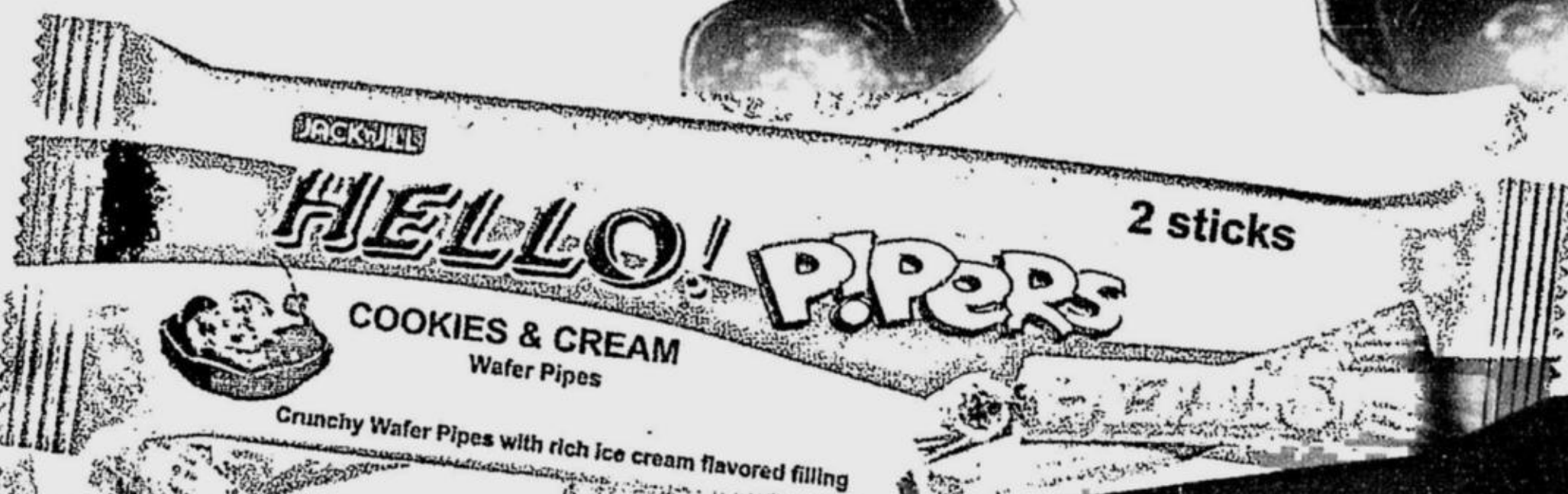
FULL HOUSE

BY STEPH BRAVO

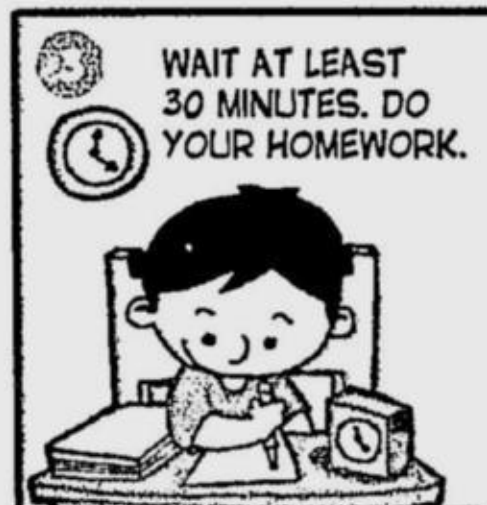


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ANG ICE CREAM FLAVOR
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Sunday INK

October 23, 2007

Maritoni Fernandez

Finding Christmas

+
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Barking Dogs

That Christmas in Isabela, we had merely replayed a scene from many places, many different times: of barking dogs and Christmas joy and hope silencing rancor and anger, enmity and bullets

THAT Christmas season some 20 years ago, I had been restless, somewhat alienated by Yuletide commercialism in Manila. Two days before Christmas, I felt I just had to go and seek refuge by visiting Sr. Julia Gonzales, RGS, a Good Shepherd sister who was working in San Mariano, Isabela. I had worked in her barrio as a student volunteer the previous summer, and for some reason the place was constantly on my mind.

So the day before Christmas, I took a long, bumpy bus trip up to Ilagan, Isabela, followed by an even bumpier jeepney trip to San Mariano, wondering along the way if I had made a foolish decision.

I arrived at the barrio in the evening—not really that late, but in rural areas, life grinds to a halt soon after dusk. The last stretch had to be made on foot and it all seemed so desolate. There was no electricity in the barrio so all there was were

the occasional candle-lit huts of the villagers until eventually, Sr. Julia's hut came into view.

"Sr. Julia, Sr. Julia," I called out, "Merry Christmas."

Sr. Julia was overwhelmed; but like a grandmother, she went from delight to gentle scolding. San Mariano was heavily militarized, an area known for clashes between the New People's Army and the military.

I spent the next few days there, learning what Christmas could be. The poverty was so severe there wasn't an exchange of gifts. No caroling, no Christmas trees, no Christmas feasts. But the spirit was there, generating its own warmth and teaching me that the best homage to Christ and his message was silence and simplicity.

Over the years I had lost touch with Sr. Julia, until a few months ago, when I began to practice Zen and was taken in as a student by Sr. Rosario Battung, RGS, another Good Shepherd sister. The first teaching session I had with her, Sr.

Rosario asked me to listen to dogs barking in the distance. "They," she said mysteriously, "will be your guide." And suddenly I remembered Sr. Julia and asked about her.

A few days later, I was with Sr. Julia, now retired and frail at the Good Shepherd convent. I wanted to tell her about how, that Christmas Eve more than 20 years ago, I had indeed been apprehensive but had found comfort in barking dogs along the way. Their barking had not been hostile nor threatening; rather they barked to mark their territory but in the process were able to "guide" me to Sr. Julia's hut. It was their barking, too, that reassured me that things were "normal" in the barrio, that people were around and that there had been no military skirmishes or encounters.

But I kept my silence, just holding Sr. Julia's hands, comforted by returning memories. That Christmas in Isabela, we had merely replayed a scene from many places, many different times: of barking dogs and Christmas joy and hope silencing rancor and anger, enmity and bullets. •



Illustration by Steph Bravo

Figure It Out

336 A.D.: The year Western Christians first celebrated Christmas on December 25, after Emperor Constantine had declared Christianity the Roman Empire's favored religion.

9: Number of dawn Masses in the traditional Misa de Gallo or Misa de Aguinaldo

4,826: Average number of live births in a day in the Philippines in 2000 for the entire year

4,918: Average number of live births a day in the Philippines in December 2000 alone

1.9 billion: Estimated number of Christmas cards sent in the US every year

30: Number of languages available for Hallmark cards, touted as the world's largest producer of greeting cards, as distributed in 100 countries.

P50-P80: Price range of "anahaw parol" made in Daraga, Albay, as of 2003

P25-P75: Price range of "abaca parol" made in Daraga, Albay, 2003

P300,000: Amount needed to produce giant

Christmas lanterns (18-foot diameter) in Pampanga as of 2005

2,000: Estimated number of families involved in the production of Christmas lanterns in San Fernando, Pampanga

12,000+: Estimated daily passenger volume in the domestic terminal of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport during the Christmas season of 2005

Prepared by Inquirer Research

Source: Inquirer Archives, National Statistics Office, Hallmark, Christianitytoday.com, Official website of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Manila



The Meat of the Matter

Philippine Airlines' executive chef Ian McKenzie on the art of choosing and cooking meat

JUDGING from his background, Ian Hall McKenzie is the perfect person to oversee in-flight meals for Philippine Airlines (PAL). It takes a special breed of chef to produce dishes that remain grounded in good taste at 35,000 feet.

McKenzie, an Australian born in Scotland, discovered the world of culinary arts on a lark at 15, when he decided to try out a cooking course at a local school. He became an apprentice chef in 1966.

Now 56, McKenzie is PAL's executive chef for catering services. He took over in 2005 after working in various top jobs in England, as well as for China Airlines, Malaysia Airlines and Ansett Airlines. In this capacity, McKenzie is in charge of a kitchen that prepares food for thousands of passengers every day, food that has to remain awesome even at cruising altitudes.

Part of McKenzie's thrust has been to include uniquely local flavors at those rarefied heights, which explains why Filipino staples like Goldilocks pastries now tickle palates on PAL flights. Perhaps the most impressive magic he does is to combine traditional Filipino tastes with international flavors and contemporary touches. McKenzie's handiwork can be seen in his handling of something that can be both basic and fancy: meat.

McKenzie explains: "Meat has always been highly prized as a very good source of energy, although some cultures and religions that prize vegetable or plant life more tend to avoid it. But once the arguments are settled, a good barbecue is hard to beat, with the warm coals heating the grill bars, the meat being cooked on the searing bars and flavors intoxicating the nostrils, leaving one salivating. For every good argument against meat, there is a counterclaim."

Filipinos, for example, have their own preferences. "Pinoys, like people of other culture, are driven by their forebears," he says. "Where meat is concerned, particularly beef, there is a cut perfectly matched for a particular dish."

The chef enumerates the cuts and method for various Filipino meat dishes: *Bulalo* (beef shank, slow cooking), *Bistek Tagalog* (tenderloin or strip loin, barbecue or grilling), *Tapa* (grass-fed tenderloin, wing ribs, strip loin, rump), *Giniling* (minced sirloin for fast cooking, chuck steak for slow cooking), *Pochero* (rolled brisket, shoulder or chuck tenders), *Morcon* (round knuckle or strip

Making the Cut

McKenzie on getting the best cuts of meat

1. Plan ahead and decide what dish you're going to cook. Ask your butcher for the best cuts for the desired dish.

2. Like cheese and wine, meat should be aged. Beef, if kept well under good storage condition, will benefit from 21-30 days of aging before consuming.

3. Get your meat vacuum packed if possible. This will protect the meat and assist with a little wet aging. Carefully handled meat will be slightly firm to the touch and the smell will be mild and fresh.

4. Keep your meat well-chilled (one to four degrees Celsius)

and frozen, if bought frozen. Defrost in the chilled area of your fridge. Always keep your meat well wrapped, labeled and protected from the air of the chiller or freezer compartment.

5. Marinades protect meat, add flavor and help to tenderize it.

6. Try to avoid home trimming as this is wasteful if one has no other use for the trimmings than food for the pet dog. Having a dish already in mind when you go to the butcher will help a lot in the planning and buying, and will save you time and money, not to mention improve food on the table. •

loin, slow braise), and *Callos* (tripe and knuckle beef, slow braise). For McKenzie's advice on how to maximize the flavors of meat in these dishes, please visit www.inquirer.net.

McKenzie has his personal favorites when it comes to meat. "I like rump. In my early years in the kitchen, we used to bone them regularly and hang them till tender. The steaks were just the best. A good braised brisket or eye round makes for a flavorful meal. My favorite beef dish of all time would be braised oxtail as I really like the bone flavors and gelatinous richness on the palate."

He also likes braised beef rump points Lyonnaise with plenty of onions, English steak and kidney pudding using suet pastry (steamed), Roast rib of Aberdeen Angus beef with Yorkshire pudding, pan gravy and horseradish sauce.

Ultimately, McKenzie knows that the basics can be the best. "Of course, a nice grilled steak is always appealing. Here, picking the correct meat is critical to the finished product. Try to avoid beef which is too dark; the meat should be reddish pink with clean whitish creamy fat," he advises.

The sheer power of that last description is ample evidence of why meat remains the centerpiece of every meal, and McKenzie says it will stay that way. "We are no longer hunter-gatherers," he says. "Although we do that from a shopping trolley, we now hunt for quality and competitive pricing." •

From Shoeshine Boy to Tycoon

Right from the start, Tony Cabangon Chua had two major strikes against him: he was born out of wedlock, and he grew up poor. But these did not stop him from being a self-made multi-millionaire

HORATIO Alger Jr. was the Stephen King of his day. Arguably, he was the most successful novelist of the late 19th century, in spite of having only one plot which he used over and over again.

His heroes were invariably dirt-poor street urchins who, by dint of hard work, perseverance, and timely mentoring by a wise father-figure, pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps to become wealthy captains of industry. Alger's novels were hugely influential on readers who took his homely message to heart: work hard, be honest and fair, improve yourself, and life will reward you with success.

To this day, a rags-to-riches tale is still referred to as a "Horatio Alger story." Ironical, since hardly anyone reads Horatio Alger anymore.

Of course, now that Bill Gates is the paradigm of worldly success, most aspirants would rather skip the first part about hardship and suffering and go straight on to becoming dot.com millionaires.

They're missing the point: the struggle's the thing. It's the hardship and suffering that give meaning to success, and vice versa.

Just ask self-made multi-millionaire and former Laos ambassador Antonio L. Cabangon Chua.

Cabangon Chua's life is Horatio Alger writ large. In fact, it reads like a telenovela—with an added twist: from riches to rags and back to riches again.

His father, a well-to-do Chinese businessman, is killed by the Japanese during the war, leaving him and his mother with nothing but the clothes on their backs. They are forced to live with wealthy relatives who treat his mother like a



If the shoe fits: From bootblack to man about town

servant. Pride wins out and they choose dignified poverty over abject security. The boy takes an assortment of odd jobs, from shoeshine boy to fish vendor. It is here that the pivotal dramatic moment occurs. While shining the boots of a sadistic G.I., he is kicked to the gutter like a dog. In his rage and shame, he vows to the heavens that he will, like Scarlett O'Hara in "Gone With The Wind," "never go hungry again." And then some. His mother scrapes up enough capital to set up a small *sari-sari* store. They scrimp and save, and with their meager earnings, he is able to go to college and complete an accounting course. He starts a jeepney route, and then opens a pawnshop with some partners. He builds a business empire slowly, going from modest success to modest success: night clubs, motels, markets, until he hits the big time. He goes into insurance, publishing, real estate, hotels—all under his own steam—and each venture is blessed by his Midas touch. Finally, he is able to look back on all he has accomplished

and say that success is the best revenge on the poor hand that fate had dealt him.

So stirring was the tale that National Artist Nick Joaquin titled his 1986 biography of Cabangon Chua "A Saga of Success." At the time of his death in 2004, Joaquin had begun work on a sequel and had in fact completed several hours of interviews with Cabangon Chua and those close to him. The sequel was eventually completed by Joaquin's protégé Jose F. Lacaba and this writer. Titled "The Continuing Saga of Success," it takes up where Part One leaves off.

Excerpt:

In Antonio L. Cabangon Chua, Joaquin must have found a subject worthy of his prodigious talents: the success story of a modern Filipino who, by dint of his own indomitable will, ceaseless struggle, and hard-won knowledge of the workings of the world, managed to rise from a poverty-stricken background to carve out his own business empire, an empire that today encompasses insurance, health care, banking, property management, newspapers and magazines, a memorial park, a hotel chain, a car dealership, and countless other enterprises.

"You should ask what businesses I am not in," Cabangon Chua says of his diverse interests. "Modesty aside, I am in a little of everything."

At least 5,000 families depend upon his enterprises for their living, and Cabangon Chua, now in his seventies, continues to embark upon new business ventures. Yet he is loathe to call himself *taipan*. In all humility, he says, "I am a nobody" compared with the Sys, Gokongweis, Tans, and Yuchengcos. "I know my limitations."

In fact, this reserve officer of the Armed Forces would rather call himself "*Taong-lupa*," because he refuses to forget where he came from.

In "A Saga of Success," Joaquin speculates at length on the inner psychology that might have motivated Cabangon Chua to succeed.

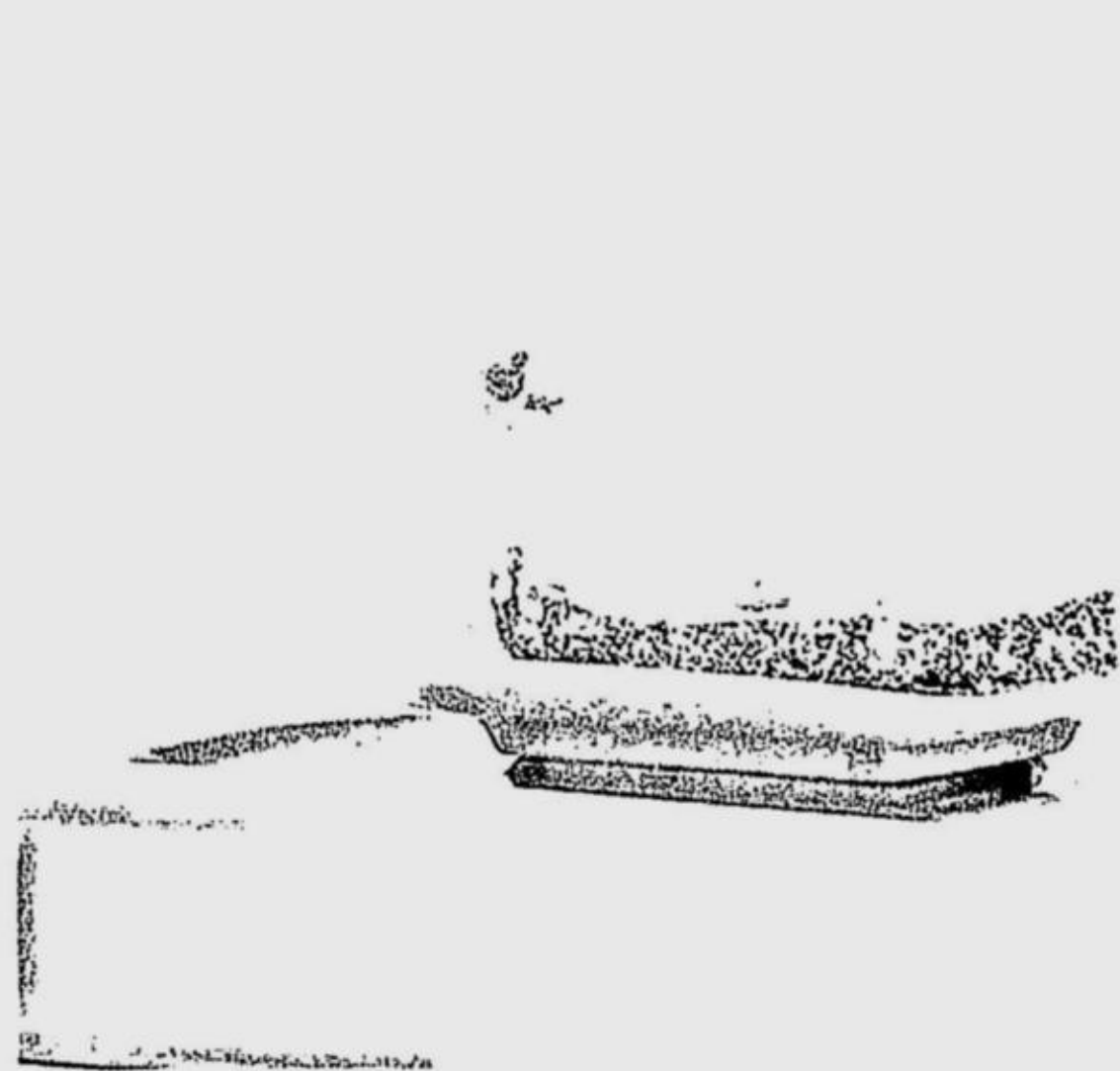
"Antonio L. Cabangon Chua had a couple of strikes against him from the start. One is growing up poor. The other is (literally) more sinister. He was born, as he puts it, 'outside the *kulambo*,' meaning his parents were not married.... That and poverty should have killed any chance of him making his way up in the world. Not to mention the bitterness that should have soured his entire outlook on life. But that was not the effect of misery on Tony."

Cabangon Chua himself admits: "I have a burning desire to succeed in life because of the way my mother was treated by our rich relatives

(continued on page 12)

Gifts of Great Taste

How to get ready for your New Year's Resolutions: first, you gotta indulge...



Sweet offerings: Frozen brazo de Mercedes and assorted jams

Courtesy of The Sweet Life by Ange



Margaux Salcedo

CRAMMING for that last minute Christmas menu or Christmas gift? Here are some items my true love sent to me ...

On the first day of Christmas, my true love sent to me ... a box of **Rum Raisin Truffles** by Honey Dy. These gorgeous truffles are coated with dark chocolate and have just a hint of rum. They come in an elegant wooden box (P360) or in a gold box (P360). Contact Honey at 0918-5304610.*

On the second day of Christmas, my true love sent to me... two rolls of **Sweet Surrender** from The Sweet Life by Ange. This is a frozen brazo de Mercedes that I call a "first date dessert" because it's just light and happy and hopeful, and so deceptively innocent, really like a first date. You hear Kylie Minogue singing "Lucky" in the background as you bite into it (or the Supremes or a young Britney Spears, depending on your generation!). The Sweet Life by Ange is part of the Baker's Dozen Bazaar held every weekend at the Power Plant "food court" (Concourse Level). Contact 0917-8238198 or 815-0188.*

On the third day of Christmas, my true love sent to me ... three **Jars of Jam** by Kablon Farms. Name your favorite fruit and they most likely have the preserve version of it. A pack of three jars costs only P150 to P180, depending on the variety (mangosteen preserve is pricier), and is packaged creatively enough to give away as a no frills gift. Kablon Farm Foods has its main office in South Cotabato but the kiosk Sari Sitsirya at the Fiesta Market near the open parking area in Market! Market! carries their products.

On the fourth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me... four layers of heaven in Karen Young's

Frozen Strawberry Brazo de Mercedes. A unique take on the brazo, the bottom layer is chocolate cake! The contrasting flavors of chocolate against strawberry is lovely. The disco of taste, texture and even temperature is just wild in this baby, you must try it to believe it! Contact Karen's Kitchen 898 2280.

On the fifth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me ... five different kinds of **cheese** from Santi's. A basket of cave-aged gruyere, brie and any of your other favorite European cheeses will make you "Say Cheese!" on Christmas day. Santi's Delicatessen, WIC Building, 7431 Yakal Street, San Antonio Village, Makati City.

On the sixth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me ... six bags of **chicharon** from Obet's Chicharon. These are thick and with almost half an inch of fat. The outer layer of skin is crunchy and then your teeth sink into the gooey fat that later gets stuck between your teeth. Eviilll! Contact 0917-8339539.

On the seventh day of Christmas, my true love sent to me ... seven packs of **pastillas de leche**. I love anything made from carabao milk—carabao cheese (*kesong puti*), ice cream, and, of course, *pastillas*. Alice Special Pastillas de Leche uses pure carabao milk. Contact 0920-9209660 or 713-5040 or visit Sari Sitsirya at the Fiesta Market in Market! Market!

On the eighth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me ... eight pieces of **Premium Atlantic Salmon Steak** from Icebox. These are packed and cost only P330 per pack (net weight 400 to 450 grams). Or you can order a whole salmon (4 to 5 kgs) at P490 per kilo. This is perfect for those who don't want to go to market on Christmas day because Icebox delivers for a minimum order of P500. Contact 487-9802 or

visit the Legazpi Market in Legazpi Village (near the park) today (Sunday mornings only).

On the ninth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me... nine **New York Strip Steaks**. Icebox also packs steaks (NY Strip Steak P270/pack, 450 grams). Their meats are imported from South America.

On the tenth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me... ten buns from the **Panaderia** of Sonya's Garden (Buck Estate, Alfonso, Cavite—just a bit past Tagaytay). These are baked as fresh as the salads they serve. While you're there you might also want to take home Sonya's salad dressings that will remind you of the wonderful escape you experienced at her Country Bed and Breakfast. Call 0917-533 5140.

On the eleventh day of Christmas, my true love sent to me... eleven **fruit baskets**. ATM Fruit Stall in Market! Market! near the fastfood area has exotic fruits such as persimmon, Japanese pears, and black grapes. Contact Rene at 0917-7001200.

On the twelfth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me... 12 scoops of **Haagen Dazs ice cream**! The first non-franchise branch of Haagen Dazs has opened in Mall of Asia and is just screaming for attention! Think chocolate fondue but instead of fruits or marshmallows, you dunk in bite-size ice cream balls. Or a chocolate journey via a plateful of variations of chocolate ice cream. You'll melt!

Too much? Come on, what are New Year's Resolutions for? Have a Merry Christmas, everyone! Don't count calories—count blessings! •

*Orders need two to three days' advance notice.

Cover Story

By Jesselyn Gade la Cruz
Photos by J. Quiao Punzalan



Home for Christmas, At Last

As the daughter of a British Lord, Maritoni Fernandez has seen the world and gone places. But she hated her life. Until it was almost snatched from her

FIFTY more Christmases is all she's asking for, and every one of them to be spent at home with family gathered around her—daughter Alexia, son Liam, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

"I'm hoping to live into my eighties, and I want what my *lola* has," she says, with a look that's a mix of defiance and wistfulness. "We celebrated her 88th birthday last week, and we were all here, like it was Christmas," she continues. "I told her, *Inang*, I want to live to be as old as you, and to see my great grandchildren. But even if I don't, I hope they turn out to be the way yours are."

Maritoni Fernandez is 38, and needs 50 more years to get to her grandmother's age. She does not know though if she'll have them. Alexia is 12

and Liam is 2; still a long way off from the next generation. But this actress dares look so far into the future—and asks for so much—because she knows that even from year to year, even for the short term, there are no guarantees.

It has been more than seven years since she was diagnosed with breast cancer, fought a grueling battle against it for a year, and won. She came through the experience realizing that life can never be the same again. Having had cancer, even if the disease is in remission, really means living with the continuing possibility of its recurrence. One can take this negatively, living in fear and dread; or positively, as Maritoni does, focusing not on *how long* but on *how much* life is lived.

"Even to this day I live my life with that cloud over my head. But all I care about is that I'm

okay now, and I'm holding on to what I've got. I live for now—I really do."

For Maritoni, the eldest of four daughters of Lord Anthony Moynihan, a British lord of the House of Leeds, Christmas evokes happy memories of home because it meant traveling back to the Philippines where her mother was. "Up to now, no matter where you were, you had to be home with Mom on Christmas. If not for that, I probably wouldn't have come home anymore," she shares.

Childhood for this actress was both "great" and "difficult." Her father was a British lord with a checkered past who raised Maritoni and her three sisters in the manner of royalty, but also in a way she describes as "off the beaten path."

Born in England, she spent her early years in the Philippines where her parents decided to settle. At 10, she was sent to Taipei to study. "My father had amazing foresight, and believed that someday there would be more people speaking Chinese than any other language." So she was sent off to live with a Chinese family and study in a Chinese school for two years.

"My parents said they wouldn't come visit me unless I could get into a cab and tell the driver exactly where we were going without getting lost. That took about six months. On my sixth month, I called them and said, ok guys, time to come over."

After Taipei, Maritoni was packed off to a boarding school in England, where she lived for the next seven years. By then her parents had divorced, but there was always her Mom to come visit in Manila and her British grandmother in London.

At 19, her father wanted her to go on to university, but she had decided she wanted to live in the Philippines. So she hid all the acceptance papers from the universities and packed for home. Today, on hindsight, she realizes that what she was really longing for was to "live at home—and to me home was where my Mom was."

"Maybe it's because I was shoved into so many situations growing up that all my life I've always been asking: Do I really belong here? In Taipei, I was a European among Chinese students. In England, I was the daughter of a British lord, more British than many of the girls in school, but I was half-Filipino so to them I was a 'half-breed.' It was tough."

Her parents' divorce has also given her "separation and abandonment issues", she theorizes, burdens which she carries into her relationships.

Back in the Philippines, Maritoni found her niche in show business, got married and had a daughter. Soon after, there was the Big C to fight and later, a divorce to go through. A showbiz relationship blazed and fizzled out, then came the gift of having another child.

Uncannily, the experience of battling cancer gave

her a different lens through which to view everything that has happened in her life.

"Growing up, I've always asked myself so many 'whys.' Why did I have to go to Taipei? Why did I have to study in England? Why did I have to be away so much? Why did I have divorced parents and a broken family?" Maritoni recalls. "At the time I was going through it, it always seemed like I hated my life. I hated the fact that my parents divorced and that they packed me off to China and then to boarding school when they were here in the Philippines. I hated that I had to go showbiz just to make money. Everything to me was one big problem—I was never in control.

"And then, when I got sick, I realized why. Because if I didn't go through all that ordeal—mentally, emotionally, and yes, physically—I would not have been prepared to face cancer."

She also began to appreciate the life she always felt she hated. "I only saw that I had tough childhood. Of course it was wonderful, being able to travel and see the world and all that, but when you're a child, you don't appreciate that. You just want to be with your Mom. Now that I'm much older and have two kids of my own, I look back and realize I've really lived a full life. I wish I could go back and cherish them more. My only regret was that I wasn't in the moment when it was happening. And that's why I felt cheated. Just when I've finally realized that I have to live for today and enjoy every second of it, then you're going to tell me life's ending?"

And that's why she fought to stay alive, says Maritoni, again defiantly and wistfully. "I love where I am. I love my home; I love my children; I love my life. There isn't anything about it that I don't love—and I want to stay alive and live my life."

She was able to survive the agonizing

"I love where I am. I love my home; I love my children; I love my life. There isn't anything about it that I don't love—and I want to stay alive and live my life."

chemotherapy sessions, she shares, because her daughter, who was six at the time was with her through it all. "People said I shouldn't expose her to it, but then I was so scared I wouldn't make it. I was thinking about my parents' divorce when I was ten, and how I didn't understand what was going on and why. I brought so much of that confusion with me growing up. I didn't want my daughter to have that. So I decided that even if it ended up with me dying, I wanted her to understand why I died. A lot of kids who have lost a parent through death or divorce don't understand—they think they did something wrong and God punished them. I don't want Alexia growing up with that kind of baggage."

The experience was apparently good for both of

them. Maritoni recalls Alexia sitting at the foot of her bed during her worst moments, just holding her hand and whispering, "Mommy, please don't die." The little girl also learned to give her injections, and she would gently but sternly say, "Mommy, this is going to hurt, but you know you have to take this because it will make you well."

To this day Maritoni calls Alexia her "rock." The little girl is the reason she endured the chemo sessions even when giving up seemed the better, sweeter option.

The tears come as she recalls the experience. No, not because of the pain or trauma, she explains, but because of the thought of what she could have missed had she given up. "I really can't help crying when I think of what I had been given, which I didn't appreciate before I got sick—and the other blessings that have come since my illness."

Foremost of these blessings, she says, is Liam, the baby most everyone told her she couldn't, or shouldn't, have because of the cancer. When he was conceived, the idea of abortion came up because, as it was explained to her, the baby could have congenital problems from the cancer drugs she had taken. Pregnancy, she was told, also triggers the release of hormones that could hasten the spread of her type of cancer.

Today, Liam is a shy but precocious 2-year-old, lord of the home she shares with his dad Driter Sarmiento, and of course Alexia.

Maritoni took a break from show business for about three years to enjoy this real miracle of life, but expects to get busy soon on a new ABS-CBN telenovela titled "Lobo" with Piolo Pascual and Angel Locsin.

In the meantime, she has set up an interactive party-organizing company called Hi5, and continues with her advocacy on cancer prevention, detection and treatment. She is actively involved with the I Can Serve Foundation for cancer survivors. With her best friend Kelly dela Merced, she has also put up Save the Susus, a company that produces promotional items for sale, the proceeds of which will be channeled back into the breast cancer campaign. With another friend, she has set up a company to promote and market Green Power, a barley-based health food supplement imported from Japan and which she has been taking for the past seven years. Green Power is already being marketed in the Visayas and Mindanao.

This Christmas, Maritoni will be living and cherishing every single moment of joy with her little family—Driter, Liam and Alexia. "I grew up always wanting to go home," she says teary-eyed. "Now I know that home is where I am, with people I love and people who love me, no matter where that may be. That's all that matters for a truly great Christmas." •

For more information, log on to greenpowerbarley.multiply.com or call Flor at 0917-8103091; and sususforlife.multiply.com for "Save the Susus." For party organizing needs, contact Hi5 through Flor at 0917-8103091.



Enjoying every second: Maritoni with son Liam

'One Day They Will Grow'

Her parents had always told her that her stumps would someday grow into hands and feet. They didn't, but Melody Tamayo found that with people giving a hand, it is possible for those with disabilities to finally stand on their own

SEVERAL company messengers mill around the reception area of the elegant penthouse office waiting for Melody Virgo Tamayo, 27, to receive mail and sign acknowledgement receipts. The receptionist looks very corporate in her office uniform and headset. From her work station, she moves about briskly, taking calls and tapping at her computer keyboard simultaneously. Despite the heavy work load on her hands, she greets visitors pleasantly and directs them to the right offices with a smile.

Most of the regulars wait politely, while the others watch her intently and exchange baffled looks. They walk away studying Melody's neat signature on the form and look back at her several times. How could she do it when she has no hands and feet?, they're probably thinking. At 4'11", Melody is a sight to behold, her arms narrowing down to stumps while the pegs at the end of her legs are daintily encased in doll shoes.

"I didn't realize I wasn't normal," says the petite Ilongga. "When I asked my parents why I was different from my brother and cousins, they told me my hands and feet would grow. For years I accepted this as the truth and woke up every morning eager to check if they grew while I was asleep. Of course they didn't," Melody adds, trying to smile. "I asked more questions as I grew older because I saw that normal babies and neighborhood children my age had complete sets of fingers and toes."

The inquisitive child finally got her answer from relatives. They told Melody that when her mother was pregnant with her, her father confessed to having another wife and children in a nearby municipality. With a year-old son to care for, her distraught mother didn't want another child and desperately tried to abort her, Melody recounts. The drugs left her with the undeveloped limbs.



Melody: Proving others wrong

Despite her congenital deformity, Melody's parents raised her well. They taught her not to feel disabled or inferior to anybody. "My brother and I did the same household chores," she explains. "I also mopped the floor and cooked."

Melody's father was a military man and was determined to help his daughter become independent. "One day he wrote my name on a sheet of paper and set the pencil down in front of me. He told me to copy what he wrote and I did. I grasped the pencil like this," she demonstrates with the pen positioned between her wrists. "It wasn't difficult at all and became easier with practice."

Her mother refused to send her to

school out of fear that she would be ridiculed, but her father was determined to give his daughter the semblance of a normal life in every way he could, and enrolled her in a coed school in Iloilo City. Melody doesn't have memories of her classmates mistreating her in kindergarten and thought she fitted in quite well until her teacher told her she didn't make the honor roll. "She said I was always in incomplete uniform because I went to school without shoes. I never needed shoes in the past," she recounts with a giggle. "The comment on my report card said, 'Not in black shoes.' The next year my father had special shoes made for me and I returned to school feeling like a superstar."

After graduating with honors with a

degree in BS Marketing from the University of the Philippines-Visayas in Iloilo City, Melody was hired by a blind employee at the Iloilo municipal hall to do clerical work. They might have looked like an odd couple but the kind gentleman provided Melody practical help that opened a new world for her. He encouraged her to apply for a scholarship with the Disabled People's International in Japan.

In a few months Melody received the grant and left for Japan to join the Independent Living for Disabled People program. "Before I left, I didn't understand why we call the Philippines a third world country while Japan is classified as first world," she says. "After I saw how the Japanese nurture their disabled, I realized our country has very poor social services compared to theirs and hardly any program to help Filipinos living with disabilities," she adds sadly. "In Japan I lived alone and attended workshops daily, where I learned book binding, Adobe and Photoshop. Even people with multiple disabilities and those mentally challenged were productive."

Melody returned to the Philippines feeling empowered and excited to find a job. With happy memories of her life in Japan, she walked up and down Ayala Avenue, personally submitting her resume to Human Resource managers. But, she recalls, most of them eyed her like she was a specimen on display and asked her redundant questions about her deformities instead of focusing on her skills. Many didn't hide their skepticism until it all became too much even for one as brave as she is.

In a big call center, she recounts, a team leader grilled her in full view and earshot of all the agents. His

(continued on page 12)

ATTACK OF THE FREAKIN' FRUITCAKE!



It's here! It's big!
It's gross! Well,
duh? Lemme at it!

liquor content alone conquers—even before the first bite. Persevere and you'll find yourself seduced by its distinctive blend of sweet, nutty and bold flavors. I would liken the distinctly dense flavor to the unique taste of the freshest oysters, the lightly salted perfection of beluga caviar, the silky texture of *uni*, the intoxicating cheesy tang of *durian* and the hearty satisfaction of puffing on a really good Cuban cigar. Not everyone appreciates these aromas and flavor profiles—but after all, fruitcake was never intended to be a “caviar to the general public.”

Not for the fast food junkie, the fruitcake is one of those stuff in life that's never rushed, as it needs one to three months to fully absorb and mellow its alcohol content. As top shelf liquor and fancy ingredients do not translate well into mass production, the best fruit cakes are often expensive, limited in number and, more often than not, pre-ordered. Some recipes are handed down through generations, while the few fruitcakes made in family kitchens are reserved as gifts to one's dearest and closest friends. So with their hefty price tags and limited quantities, it's safe to assume that the legendary fruitcakes which have supposedly been circling the globe for years are the generic varieties; the really good fruitcakes are never recycled but hoarded and savored.

The fruitcake's tarnished reputation as a doorstop and the world's most recycled gift may have begun when Johnny Carson once joked about “there being only one fruitcake in the United States, and it is being passed around year after year, from family to family.”

Bakers and aficionados have been defending the much-maligned fruitcake ever since, seeking to win back old believers or gain a new following with ad campaigns and modern recipes incorporating more familiar, crowd-pleasing ingredients like chocolate. With all the hype around it, often around Christmas time, one would presume that people knew enough about fruitcake to decide whether they loved it or hated it, and whether Christmas would be the same without fruitcake.

Considered the original power bar, fruitcake has a track record that few cakes can match. Food scholars date fruitcake back to ancient Egypt and the Roman Empire. According to some historians, Egyptian fruitcake was considered an essential food for the afterlife. Internet sources note that in ancient Rome, “raisins, pine nuts and pomegranate seeds were added to barley mash, making the fruitcake not only a handy and lethal catapult ammunition, but also a hearty compact food ideal for the long campaigns waged by the conquering Roman legions.”

In Victorian England, it was a custom for unmarried wedding guests to put a slice of dark fruitcake under their pillow at night so they would dream of the person they would marry.

My first memory of fruitcake was one shared with

my mother. Every Christmas, she would excitedly await a green foil-wrapped cake from a favorite aunt, and when it finally came, would eagerly treat herself to minute slices of the loaf. When we were old enough to ask, she would carefully ration out bite size portions of the cake. I have five sisters who also demanded their fair share, so the cake never lasted past New Year and we resigned ourselves to waiting a whole year again for the delicious treat. Thus did fruitcake teach me key lessons in life like patience, moderation and the ability to handle my alcohol. After fruitcake, I'm afraid I have nothing much to say about the other desserts I enjoy, except that they taste good and wreak havoc on my thighs.

Ultimately, in a world where nothing lasts forever, it's nice to know there are things that almost do... So how long will a fruitcake keep? Johnny Carson's and other jokes aside, the best response I've ever heard so far is—till you eat it all up. •

Fruitcake vs iPod

Ten reasons why fruitcakes beat iPods as holiday gifts

1. iPods cost P4,500 and up; good fruitcakes can be had at P500 and up.
2. Fruitcakes need no frivolous accessories to be enjoyed. It can be savored as it is.
3. You're less likely to waste your spending money at iTunes with a fruitcake.
4. Walk around wearing an iPod and everyone yawns. Walk around wearing a fruitcake and you're a trendsetter.
5. iPod: 2.5-inch color display. Fruitcake: 10-inch multi-faceted, crystallized fruit display.
6. You can't use an iPod as a football. Or a doorstop.
7. Fruitcakes have no batteries to replace.
8. iPod: 7,500 songs. Fruitcake: the song in your heart, and the antacids in your medicine cabinet.
9. You can't call your enemy “nutty as an iPod.” Well, you can. But nobody's going to understand you.
10. In all likelihood, your fruitcake will still be good three years from now.

FRUIT cake, how do I love thee? Let me count the ways.

Sinfully rich, delightfully decadent and intensely alcoholic—what's not to love? With its heady mixture of pecans, walnuts, almonds, dates, golden raisins, cherries, prunes, molasses and brandy, how can a plain cake made of flour, butter, eggs and sugar ever hope to compete? Angel food cake, cheesecake and brownies may be everyday favorites, but when you need to pull out all the stops and leave a lasting impression, go for the intoxicating flavors of a perfectly aged fruitcake.

Not for the faint of heart or stomach, the cake's

ATTACK OF THE FREAKIN' FRUITCAKE!



It's here! It's big!
It's gross! Well,
duh? Lemme at it!

Fruit take
the way

Sinfully ... delightfully decadent and intense alcoholic what's not to love? With its heady mixture of pecans, walnuts, almonds, dates, golden raisins, cherries, prune molasses, brandy, how could a plainer cake made of flour, butter, eggs and sugar ever hope to compete? Angel food cake, cheesecake and brownies may be everyday favorites, but when you need to put out all the stops and leave a lasting impression, go for the intoxicating flavors of a perfectly aged fruitcake.

Not for the faint of heart tomacco, the sake

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[illegible][illegible]

My first memory of fruitcake was shared with

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SUDOKU

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

			5	3	8			
		3				6		
	1						7	
7				8				1
5			9		1			2
2				5				8
	5						9	
		8				3		
			7	9	4			

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Difficulty Level ★★★★★ Answers in PDI, Dec. 24 issue 12/23

Answer to previous puzzle

2	5	3	8	6	4	1	7	9
7	1	9	2	5	3	4	8	6
8	4	6	7	9	1	5	3	2
1	8	2	6	7	9	3	4	5
9	3	4	5	1	8	6	2	7
5	6	7	4	3	2	9	1	8
4	9	8	1	2	6	7	5	3
6	7	1	3	8	5	2	9	4
3	2	5	9	4	7	8	6	1

Difficulty Level ★★★★★ PDI, Dec. 22

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'One Day They Will Grow' (from page 10)

sarcasm and derogatory remarks echoed throughout the floor whenever Melody apologized for not knowing the answer. "He wanted me to comment on a movie I hadn't seen," she recalls. "I repeatedly told him I didn't know the story but he insisted that I answer his questions about the movie. It was embarrassing and I felt so stupid." She cried in the elevator and on the bus, angry at herself for believing that she'd be given a fair chance.

Melody sulked, but only for a short while. She then left her resume at the National Council for the Welfare of Disabled People in Quezon City. Although the agency is a policy making body and not involved in direct services, they help people living with disabilities find employment.

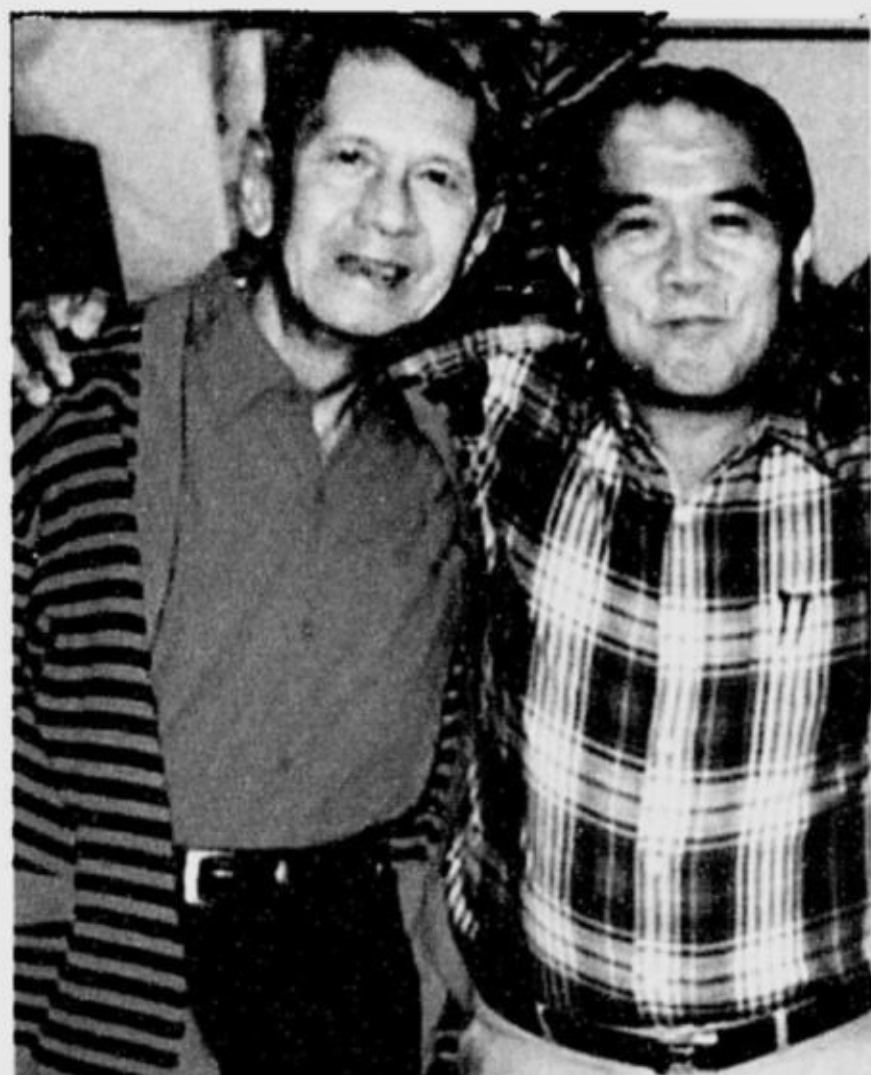
Almost immediately, Melody was hired by a big Makati trading firm. "I almost didn't accept the job," she admits with a grin. "The opening was for a receptionist and I really felt I didn't look anything like the stereotypes I met in the other companies. They all look like shampoo commercial models to me," she laughs. "It horrified me to think I would have to face all kinds of people every day, but the president of the company inspired me to accept the challenge."

Melody has been with the same company for six years now and is highly respected by her peers and superiors for her multitasking abilities, which include acting as legal assistant to the corporate lawyer.

"My mother told me I won't be able to finish

school because of my disability, I did, and with flying colors. She also said I won't be able to leave the country because of my disability. I lived alone in a foreign country for three months. My mother was sure no big company in Manila would hire me, but here I am," she says with a grin. "She doesn't think I'll ever marry. Maybe that's one more area where I have to prove her wrong," she says, half in jest.

Despite enduring instances of discrimination, Melody holds no grudges against anybody and is, in fact, a constant source of positive energy for her co-workers. "It's time we learn how to transcend physical deformities so people like me are not marginalized," she points out. "We deserve to take our rightful place in society," declares this candidate for the Rotary Club's search for Makati's Model Person With Disability Award. **Women's Feature Service**



Author and subject: Joaquin and Cabangon Chua

From Shoeshine Boy to Tycoon (from page 6)

when I was very young. It pushed me. It motivated me. They were the catalyzer who pushed me to succeed."

And as Joaquin himself put it: "Success is the best payback!"

(Apparently, it can also be a burden, attracting both paeans and brickbats. In 2004, this former ambassador to Laos was sued by his alleged mistress for attempted rape, attempted murder, serious illegal detention and violation of Republic Act (RA) 9262 otherwise known as the "Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004." The case was dismissed for lack of merit.—Ed.)

Joaquin's "A Saga of Success" ends in 1985,

when Cabangon Chua had just entered his fifties and, with half a century of struggle behind him, had begun to enjoy the fruits of his labors. That was 20 years ago, perhaps just a short nap for some, but many lifetimes over in his world.

"Whether you're rich or poor, everyone has 24 hours in a day," Cabangon Chua is fond of saying. "It's what you do with your 24 hours that counts." In the end, he says, it all boils down to this: "There is no secret of success. You just have to work hard and focus on whatever it is that you need to succeed. A talented man who takes it easy doesn't stand a chance against a mediocre man who focuses all his energy on a project. But of course, you have to dream to succeed." •



A salad spread at Sonya's Garden

Secrets to Savor

IF ever there was a book that looks good enough to eat, this would be it. Ines Cabarrus' and Elian Habayeb's collected reviews of Manila's best restaurants need no words: the pictures say it all. You can almost taste the giant prawns glistening with butter and hear the crunch of fresh greens drizzled with balsamic and olive oil. Turn the page and you encounter a split crab redolent with garlic, the succulent flesh made golden by the warm lemon-butter sauce.

Indeed, "Manila's Best Kept Restaurant Secrets" should come with a warning: Keep out of reach of impulse eaters, the cholesterol-challenged and the weak-willed. Because for sure, with the dishes on every page begging to be sampled, there's the probable scenario of readers herd-stomping it to the nearest restaurant mentioned, work deadlines and lipid levels notwithstanding. Who wouldn't take a break in the middle of a languorous afternoon for a taste of Alba's paella and Portico's Silken Tofu—extreme comfort food in times of stress? The beguiling pictures have a lot to do with the sudden craving, as do the detailed descriptions of the sumptuous offerings and the stories behind the restaurants, the chefs and their wonderful creations.

Although most of the places mentioned are no longer secret, having been raved about by other food critics and reviewers, the book offers confirmation of how taste speaks a universal language and how word of mouth is one's best advertisement. From fine dining restaurants to vegetarian nooks, homey pizza joints, casual bistros and steak houses, the list of Manila's best grazing places gives you one more excuse to postpone that diet—hey, just as soon as I go through this "to do" list!

We have one tiny bone to pick with the authors though: why, with all that luscious spread of glossy pages and the generous space for food lore and personal history, did they scrimp on the captions? Sure, the reviews speak amply of the house specialties and a picture is worth a thousand words, but can't they at least label the dishes so tantalizingly magnified in full color to avoid confusion among us Philistines who can't always differentiate the cuts of meat and types of salad? Short of trundling the book along and pointing to the scrumptious photos when ordering, one would be hard put to translate the gustatory experience from paper to actual plate. The personalities featured could also use some captions, especially in group shots, if only to credit them properly for their contributions to the good life. And then there's the reckless use of the words "infamous" and "notorious" that leaves you wondering if this is the author's shorthand for faint praise.

No matter. The book is a visual and visceral delight, and its list of secret places a handy reference for next year's slew of important dates and romantic entanglements. For the curious, this book's list of Manila's best restaurants—not necessarily secret—includes Café Ysabel, Sonya's Garden, Sugi, Lolo Dad's, Alba's, Portico 1771, Harbor View, Li Li, Fireplace Grill, Spirals, Greens, In Yo, Katre, Bellini's, Café Juanita, Sugi, Abe, Chef Laudico's, Zong, L'Opera, Amalia's, Amoroma, Skyline, Manos Greek Taverna, Verbena, Fire Lake, Antonio's, Café-on-the-Ridge, Kashmir, Sala, Mati, Old Manila, Apartment 1B, L'Incontro, Som's, Di' Marks, Palato Fino and Hossein's. Pssst, pass the word around. **PAC**

Poetry



Christmas Birthday

Mother has told me this story many times: when I was ready to be born, she panicked, finding it difficult from her bed to summon the hospital nurses, busy as they were opening gifts, eating fruitcakes, singing jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way. Christmas is just one in three hundred sixty-five and one-fourth days of a year, so what were the chances of a childbirth happening that 3 a.m.? As slim as one:

Christmas being about a birthday. As a child, father bore me up on his shoulders one night to reach for a star with a long tail. My godfather was another story. He was a long-time big-shot mayor of some suburban town who never played Santa Claus to my childhood, and all I can remember receiving from him was a greeting card with a tear-off coupon for a free one-year accident insurance, if I filled up the coupon

and mailed it to the company within a week. Which I never did. He's not mayor anymore. Often, I would be told how fortunate I was to have been born on the same day as the Holy Child, but more often I would hear about how unfortunate I was to receive package-deal gifts each year: Merry-Christmas-plus-Happy-Birthday gifts rolled up into one; like a Swiss-army knife with folding scissors, folding blade, folding nail file and clipper.

For a series of Christmases, high school friends would gather at my house in the evening, because they had to be at church with parents in the morning, and attend family gatherings till late afternoon. At my Christmas birthday they would drink and reminisce about the octopus ride at the school fair, and how they made the chemistry teacher cry, and joke about miss so-so from this exclusive all-girls school who lost her undies by the swimming pool.

They would stay on until this former classmate of ours who was then a Catholic seminarian would finally arrive close to midnight, coming all the way from visiting his folks South of Manila. He's dead now. He died a priest, in his sleep, six years after the last of our parties, which ended when someone got so drunk he threw up in the middle of the living room, and we all saw our youth, which used to be rolled up with the past, for what it was now on the floor. Happy Birthday.

Sid Gomez Hildawa
b. December 25, 1962

Feature

By Amanda R. Carpo

A Life Less Ordinary

He's not a risk-taker but when Jayjay de Ocampo found out he has diabetes, he decided to join the Ironman triathlon despite the odds, as a tribute to family and friends he has lost to the disease



Unbowed: A bloodied de Ocampo runs and rides Down Under

THE facts on the disease can be scary. Diabetes, a medical condition that prevents the body from producing or properly using insulin—the hormone needed to convert glucose into energy needed for daily life—is associated with increased risk for heart disease, hypertension, stroke, kidney failure and end-stage renal disease. It is also the leading cause of new cases of blindness among adults 20-74 years of age.

Preventing complications from diabetes can mean a rigorous routine of testing, medication, and daily, if not hourly, maintenance. It is a life sentence.

Can one lead a normal life with diabetes? The answer is no. What about an extraordinary one? The answer is yes. And Jayjay de Ocampo can prove it.

Jayjay was diagnosed with diabetes some 10 years ago prior to the birth of his eldest son Jaime. A specialist recommended that he take Forbid tablets (For Non-Insulin Dependent) twice a day, avoid sweets and exercise 30 minutes a day three to four days a week. So for five years, Jayjay controlled his diabetes through medication and diet.

When his father was similarly diagnosed with the disease, Jayjay decided to battle his affliction through exercise and a more active lifestyle. Instead of joining a gym, he decided to take on the ultimate endurance sport, triathlon. With little background in any of the sports' disciplines like swimming, cycling or running, and being a diabetic at that, the odds were against him.

As a child, Jayjay played team sports and made the school team in both soccer and basketball as

an exchange student in Colorado. He admits he made those teams out of persistence more than athletic ability. Smaller than his American teammates and competitors, he was forced to try harder.

Jayjay first heard about triathlon through a TV program and decided to attempt a sprint distance triathlon as his initial target. From that single race, he targeted, trained for and competed in other longer distances. His toughest race to date has been the Ironman which involves a 3.86 kilometer swim, a 180.2 kilometer bike ride, and a 42.195 kilometer run on the same day.

This month, Jayjay represented the country and his triathlon team PoloTri, in his second Ironman in Western Australia. Despite crashing in the bike portion of the race, he managed to cross the finish line. Bloodied, with four stitches on his head, he clocked an impressive 12 hours and 41 minutes.

Looking back, Jayjay says the thought of doing an Ironman was never a consideration for him. It was only after completing longer distances that the race became a possibility. He recalls that one of his biggest challenges was his first half-Ironman distance event, the Whiterock triathlon held annually in Subic. He remembers raising the white flag at Whiterock years ago and calling his Dad to tell him: "I'll never do that again. My body just can't take the 'beating.'" But Jayjay has come back to that race. Observers say that the races do not get easier; just that the contenders keep getting better.

A cautious person, Jayjay seems overly concerned with his safety and those of people around him, meticulously—almost obsessively—recording his workout regimen and



diet. He reports that this year, he has trained over 710 hours, ran 2,100 kilometers, logged 9,700 kilometers on his bike, and swam 332 kilometers to properly prepare for Ironman.

The irony is that, while risk-taking isn't part of his vocabulary, his daily life is full of uncertainty and danger. The most difficult part of being diabetic, he says, is the mental anguish of knowing that the disease is deadly. Over the last two years, he's lost family and friends to the disease, and none of them have put their bodies through what he does.

The fact is, Jayjay is motivated by the goals he sets not only for himself but for a bigger cause. He keeps a list of his friends and family who have succumbed to diabetes on his bike whenever he does an Ironman so he is constantly reminded that he is competing for them as well. For him, triathlon is a great way to cope with grief and the burden of having diabetes. More and more, diabetics are looking at endurance sports as an excellent way to help battle the disease. After all, it's all about beating the odds, challenging the prognoses, and taking advantage of a life less ordinary. •

Photos courtesy of Western Australia Ironman

Leap to Glory

Abandoned by his mom after his US Marine dad left them, smooth basketball guard Jason Castro is out to prove that the right genes, a good attitude and hard work can overcome life's bad breaks

FOR the past eight months, amateur star Jason Castro had traveled to five countries with the Philippine men's basketball team, culminating in the cagers' gold medal at the Southeast Asian Games (SEAG).

In one of those trips, the 5-foot-10 guard flashed another dazzling display of skills and speed against taller opponents to finish with an all-around game of 16 points, five assists and three steals in 31 minutes of action.

The performance caught the fancy of foreign sports officials who immediately offered him to play in the Australian National Basketball League.

"I felt excited, it was unexpected," says Castro in Filipino. "It's an opportunity that does not happen too often, so I might check it out if the offer is good. It could be another adventure."

Despite opting to first don the country's colors in the SEAG this month, the idea to play-for-pay in a foreign land thrilled Castro, who never thought he could go places—literally and figuratively—just by playing basketball.

After all, the 21-year-old cager usually went no farther than Manila from his hometown in Pampanga. But he says, "Basketball changed my life. It has helped me a lot. I never imagined things would turn out this way," he says. Still, he adds, he tries to go home every week, or at least once a month.

Home for him is San Miguel, Betis, a barrio in Guagua, Pampanga where he lives with relatives. Although he rarely shares his personal story, Castro claims he grew up just fine even when his mother, Rosario Castro, started a new family in the United States after divorcing his American father, Ronald Williams, a decade ago.



There's no stopping Jason Castro (right) in his dash for fame

"My mom said she doesn't want my dad to have a claim on me, so she changed my name," says Castro, noting that American professional basketball player Jason Williams used to be his namesake.

But unlike the National Basketball Association (NBA) standout, Castro picked up the sport's competitive spirit belatedly. "I wasn't interested in basketball at first," he notes. "I played in grade school but I only started taking it seriously in high school."

Castro initially didn't see his own promise in the sport. Unlike most Amerasians—a coined term for children born of American soldiers and Asians—he stood a shade below six feet. And neither did he get the strapping build of his US Marine father.

Yet Castro obviously inherited the so called "athletic genes" of many African-Americans. "Everything just came naturally when I started taking basketball seriously," he says. "The games of Olsen Racela and Willie Miller also influenced me. They're really good."

By typical progression, Castro got tapped to play for the varsity squad of his high school, the Don Honorio Ventura College of Arts and Trades, in Bacolor.

Basketball scouts, too, naturally gravitated to the fleet-footed teen. And by 2003, Castro suited up as a freshman for the men's basketball squad of Philippine Christian University in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).

Although he started out as a sidekick to Gabby

Espinas—another Amerasian now seeing action in the pro league—Castro played a key role in the PCU Dolphins' historic turnaround from perennial cellar-dweller to first-time NCAA champion in 2004.

And Castro continued to shine when he took over as team leader by powering the Dolphins to two more Finals appearances in the following seasons.

"What's good about him is his attitude," says PCU athletics director Fred Olano of Castro, a senior business management student. "He's concentrated on his studies and his practices. He wants to finish his studies and attends his classes as much as he can. He's also very good and polite compared to other players. He's constantly saying *po* and *opo*."

Notes Castro: "I owe a lot to PCU. I got noticed when I started playing with them."

Over at the Philippine Basketball League (PBL), the clutch-shooting guard again made history by capturing two straight Most Valuable Player awards, the first player in the past decade to bag the honor since Eric Menk won back-to-back MVP titles. Even more impressive, Castro pulled off the feat despite playing for two different teams—Hapee Toothpaste and Harbour Centre—in two succeeding conferences.

"I didn't find it hard to adjust. But I still didn't expect that I'd win another one," he says.

But to those watching Castro, the honors did not come unexpected for the young superstar whom Hapee coach Jun Noel depicts as the obedient ward who "doesn't complain" and whom Harbour Centre mentor Jorge Gallent describes as a workhorse who "does everything for us."

By July, it came as no surprise when Castro flirted with the rookie draft of the financially-tempting Philippine Basketball Association (PBA). The rebuilding, all-amateur Philippine team, however, came calling and the do-it-all guard readily responded to conquer the troubles of an upstart crew.

"We can't emphasize enough how important he is in the team," says national coach Junel Baculi of Castro, who emerged as the focal point in the formation of the squad.

PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad adds: "Jason could have easily won a third straight MVP in the PBL. He could have been among the top picks in the PBA draft. But he sacrificed all that for the 'country.'"

"I'm not rushing," says Castro. "I'm still young. I want to play for the country. It's an opportunity that doesn't happen often. It will also help me gain more exposure. After that, I want to finish my studies and play one more year for PCU. Then maybe I can play in the PBA or I'll see if the offer (to play for the pro league in Australia) is really good."

Indeed, it looks like another wonderful journey lies ahead for Castro. •



Kris: Now, I only trust
Facial Care Centre
for my skin.

A woman of high standards will not compromise quality. Like Kris Aquino who does not settle for anything less than she deserves, she entrusts her skin to the experts in skincare: Facial Care Centre.

Kris says, "Women should try Facial Care Centre. They deserve it. They have the best non-surgical skin technology, personalized service and such a pleasant environment. If you're a woman who knows you've reached a point in your life where you can afford the best because you've worked hard to attain that, you deserve to be pampered by Facial Care Centre. Discover them for yourself. I'm so glad I did."

Like Kris, trust only Facial Care.

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